

Survival in early headship.

**Preparation of primary head teachers for early headship - A social survey of the
experiences of primary head teachers, in the West Midlands of England.**

By

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Abstract.

A leadership crisis continues within the education sector (Rhodes et al., 2008; Howson & Sprigade, 2011). This research synthesises the experiences of twenty head teachers, within their first five years of headship. A social survey methodology using a semi-structured interview method was used. This research draws upon established models of leadership development by, among others, Day & Bakioglu (1996) Gronn (1999), Ribbins (2003), Browne-Ferrigno (2003) and Earley & Weindling (2007).

Emergent findings that make a contribution to new understandings are based upon aspects of motivation, personal capacity, self-belief, talent spotting to support leadership development, the role of career-coaching and the notion of affirmation of readiness for headship.

Findings support a revision of the Browne-Ferrigno (2003) model of leadership transformation with a new conceptualisation of this model along with a new conceptualisation of personal capacity as an important element in leadership transition.

These new conceptualisations will be of interest to current and aspiring leaders, those with responsibility for talent management, succession planning and leadership development.

This work is also highly relevant to researchers and others interested in leadership transition within the education sector.

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Chapter One.

1. Introduction.

The National College of School Leadership (NCSL) in their paper from 2006 assert the importance of an effective school leader and leadership team. NCSL, subsequently the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (NCLSCS) and now the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) state that school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning. The Programme for International Student Assessment (Pisa) is highly respected across the globe (Guardian, 2010), and enables politicians and policy-makers to assess how different country's education systems compare. The United Kingdom (UK) has now lost its top ten position in the study produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, (BBC, 2006; Guardian, 2010; BBC, 2013). The PISA assessment data of some 500,000 fifteen year olds in Reading, Mathematics and Science, is one indicator of the nation's learning compared to international countries. With the drop in performance compared to other nations, and the link between leadership and pupil learning then the reduction in applicants for senior leadership positions within schools is a concern. Rhodes et al., (2008) talk of the potential for a leadership crisis and Rhodes and Brundrett (2006) point out that if leadership is the key to improving the quality of education in the UK then:

‘...the trend of falling number and quality of applicants for senior and middle leadership posts in schools is of an increasing concern...’ (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006: pp. 269)

Rhodes and Brundrett go further to state that this problem is not limited to the UK alone, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the USA all report shortages of senior leaders. Collinson and Collinson (2005) report the view from Further Education senior managers that:

‘The job of the principal is highly stressful and in some cases almost impossible.’
(Collinson & Collinson, 2005: pp. 15)

With the perceptions of senior leadership as stated in Collinson and Collinson (2005) and the dwindling number and quality of applications for such posts, succession planning for replacing senior managers would seem to be essential to ensure the stability of and continued improvements in educational establishments. Succession planning alone, important for retention or as part of a succession management strategy, would be a valid area for research, however, this research seeks to look at the experiences and pathways taken by current head teachers, notably those in their early years of headship, to becoming the head of their educational institution. For, despite all the challenges, these leaders have succeeded in becoming head of their institution. Their experiences and perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of what constituted their preparation for this, arguably most challenging of roles, provides a unique and individual record of the successful path to headship. Whilst each setting, institution and headship constitute a singular individual perspective on this leadership role; it could be argued that, despite the contextual differences, a synthesis of common experiences, challenges, resolutions and preparation pathways may yield generic important preparatory lessons that could support future leadership preparation. It is noted that leadership preparation is not the sole cause of the shortages; context, isolation, the perpetually changing educational landscape, among other factors, also impact upon the shortage. Leadership preparation, in turn, could be used to

help prevent the once predicted but now very real void in head teacher availability. There is, too, the argument that research into the global problem of recruitment of head teachers or principals and the issues surrounding these posts has a place in adding to the growing research database.

1.1 The focus of the research.

Headlines warn of a leadership crisis such as ‘head teacher crisis: the numbers tell the story [Primary]’ (Guardian, 2006); ‘Schools facing a head teacher crisis [Secondary]’ (Observer, 2006). The future of school establishments to secure candidates of suitable ability, across all sectors, to senior leadership positions looks uncertain at best. Quite simply, demand will outstrip supply dramatically. The Guardian (2006) reports:

‘Compared with the 20% of experienced teachers who are now heads, we will need to have 45% as heads, and 40% as deputies. And yet only 5% of primary teachers are actively contemplating this route.’

With applications to senior leadership positions dropping (Howson and Sprigade, 2011) and the quality of the applications received for these posts diminishing (Rhodes and Brundrett, 2006), there appears to be a potential real crisis in the successful recruitment of head teachers. The apparent barriers to middle leaders feeling prepared to take the next career path step toward headship could lead to a significant skills shortage. This research has growing importance because of the current perceptions of headship, current levels and quality of applications and the number of current teachers who are thinking about headship as a future career. Further exacerbating this within the United Kingdom is the predicted number of head teacher retirements where it is expected that 33% of the current serving head teachers will be of retirement age. The Sunday Times (2009) reports:

‘Experts have warned of a crisis in the next three to four years as a third of head teachers are over 55 and due to retire by 2012. A quarter of assistant and deputy heads are also aged 55 or older, making the promotion of younger teachers critical.’

These headlines would appear to be supported by the National Association of head teachers (NAHT) who reported (2010):

‘Figures shows that a third of head teacher posts in the Primary sector were reported unfilled after an advertisement in 2009/10 compared with 26% in 2008/9. The figures for Special schools were nearly half (43%), compared with 27% in 2008/9 and for Secondary schools 20% (19%).’

This is further supported by Howson and Sprigade (2011) in the 26th Annual survey on senior staff appointments in England and Wales where their analysis of recruitment data shows:

‘Record numbers of vacancies for primary head teacher posts remained unfilled during the 2009/10 school year. The overall re-advertisement rate for primary head teacher posts exceeded 40% across England for the first time in the 26 year history of this survey.’

‘New to post’ head teachers have succeeded in moving into this senior leadership role. For the purpose of this social survey, I define early headship as those still in post between year one and year five of headship; this will be explored further and defined within the literature review.

It could be argued that despite all the perceived challenges and perceptions of headship, some singular or collective set of experiences, training, and experiences ensured that these early head teachers felt prepared and skilled enough to take on this role. It is these experiences that form the basis of this research and sets out to explore the preparation for headship as experienced by those in their early years of headship. Supporting this research, is the work of Day and Bakioglu (1996), Gronn (1999), Ribbins (2003), Browne-Ferrigno (2003), Earley and Weindling (2007), all of whom look at aspects of the journey to headship

or principal and respective models based on and around the experiences to these top posts inform this study.

1.2 The research questions.

This research sets out to explore the experiences of early head teachers and their perceptions of their preparation for headship and so answer the research questions of:

1. 'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?'

This research question is important to explore and set into context the different paths and experiences that lead to headship, but also the range and diversity of the contextual situations that individual leaders find themselves.

To support research question one, explore with interviewees,

2. 'On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?'

Finally, reflect upon the career paths and experiences of these early head teachers and their perceptions of the effectiveness of the preparation for headship and so answer the question:

3. 'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?'

Research question three will be used to identify possible common generic experiences or valuable Continuing Professional Development, CPD, perhaps essential elements they all have needed to draw on that led to a successful appointment and headship post. This research is based upon the longitudinal framework and stages of leadership development as proposed by Day and Bakioglu (1996), Gronn (1999), Gronn and Ribbins (2003) and the

transformation model proposed by Browne-Ferrigno (2003). These models should, therefore, support a skeleton conceptualisation framework of essential experiences that would be of support in the careers of potential senior leaders. This research may provide theoretical suggestions about leadership development and leadership preparation that in turn could help in recruitment and preparation of future school leaders in light of the leadership crisis.

1.3 Researcher's interest.

This research holds a specific special place of interest within my own work. I am a serving head teacher but, following my own definition of 'Early headship' for the purpose of this study, fall outside that bracket. However, I have progressed through early headship and was, in some aspects of the challenging job of headship, unprepared. The only mandatory requirement for first headship in England is to hold the National Professional Qualification for Heads, NPQH. I achieved this in 2002 at the start of my deputy headship; three years and two terms later I became one of the youngest head teachers in the country, just thirty years old. It is, as a result of my early experiences of headship that I wish to embark on this research, to help support others in their journey to headship. There may be a place for this research with a wider audience to support policy, training, and leaders and to contribute to the research base. However, being a serving head teacher brings advantages and disadvantages to this research. As a serving head teacher, an understanding of the role and its challenges leads to empathy with interviewees. However, whilst recognising the need to be mindful of my own experiences, the potential for researcher bias is very real. As a result of this, the Research Design chapter covers fully the procedures in place to limit researcher

bias whilst using the skills and experience of headship to gather the most in-depth views possible from interviewees. Twenty head teachers were chosen across the Black Country Local Education Authorities (LEA) in the West Midlands of England. The purposive sample was chosen to represent a range of schools of differing sizes and different socio-economic factors. This purposive sample was from urban Primary Schools. It may be argued that the respondents views and context they find themselves in may differ significantly from those of, for example, rural small Primary schools, nevertheless these respondents views are of value and so can contribute to the work on leadership pathways and development. The schools selected were from urban Primary Schools with head teachers who were in years 1-5 of their first headship; identification came from information as part of a Local Leader of Education. The sampling will be discussed more fully in research design chapter of this thesis.

1.4 Literature

The literature reviewed within this thesis came from a search of the University of Birmingham's online catalogue and the NCSL Leadership library and was time limited to Gronn's work from 1999. This date selection is supported by well-documented work on the careers and lives of senior leaders, work from Day & Bakioglu (1996) Gronn (1999), Ribbins (2003) Earley & Weindling (2007) on lives and careers of senior leaders. Further supported by the published work of Browne-Ferrigno (2003) on the transition to headship and work by Rhodes & Brundrett (2006) on leadership succession and retention along with work on evaluating NPQH and the transition to headship by Rhodes et al., (2009).

Searches of the Journals School Leadership and Management, Management in Education and Educational Management Administration and Leadership supplemented the review.

The models and frameworks discussed within the Literature review Chapter draw from, amongst others, these key papers to synthesise a framework of experiences including personal and professional, role conceptualisation, CPD and leadership coaching and mentoring that is used to evaluate the findings from the research.

1.5 Research design

This research involved the use of a semi-structured interview in a social survey of twenty Primary head teachers, in the West Midlands of England. Careful thought on the methods available led to the decision that this research is Humanistic, where in this case, the use of interview is the primary data source. Mason (2002) argues that it is people and their life stories that are the data sources within this (humanistic) approach. Plummer (2001) uses the phrase 'critical humanism', he explains:

'It (critical humanism) must deal with concrete human experiences – talk, feelings, and actions – through their social and economic organisation.' (Plummer, 2001: pp.14)

Ribbins (2003) explains that humanistic research is concerned with gathering and theorising from the experiences of leaders through the use of life history, life story, autobiography and biography.

This multiple social survey would allow the 'theory led illustration' (Denscombe, 2007) of how the models discussed in the literature review would apply in real life settings. The purpose being to look closely at the career paths of twenty head teachers, still within their early years of headship as previously defined, and relate this to the models discussed to inform the potential path and support programmes for future senior leaders. The head teachers interviewed in this research were chosen based on analysis of the criteria in

Denscombe (2007) of typical and convenient. Using Denscombe's criteria, interviewees who are head teachers, within the West Midlands, but head teachers who was still within the first seven years of headship and unlikely to have reached disenchantment. However, to increase the range of potential responses within this first study by drawing on as many perceptions as possible, head teachers serving a range of Primary schools of size and deprivation as defined by the percentage of children claiming free school meals (FSM). This assumption is made following the time frames proposed in the models discussed the literature review. After identifying the possibilities for interview, the closest and most convenient head teachers matching the criteria were selected; fortunately all of the selected head teachers were able to respond. Despite the work on gender by Coleman (2005) and ethnicity by Bush et al., (2006) and their role in headship, these two factors are beyond the scope of this research. head teachers interviewed within this study are defined by being in their early years (year one to year five) with disregard to their gender or ethnicity. Access to schools and their leaders is possible through the network of connections within my own local authority but also through additional links as a Local Leader of Education (LLE) working in neighbouring Black Country Authorities. Denscombe (2007) summarises the advantages and disadvantages of the survey methodology; advantages include that the approach is suited to small-scale research and theory testing. Disadvantages include, importantly, the credibility given to generalisations from findings, however, I immersed myself in the data to increase trustworthiness and the outcomes should be relatable to others to reflect upon their own work and experiences (Bassey, 1999). These advantages and disadvantages are noted and recognised here.

The method involved the use of a semi-structured interview as a tool for collecting data.

Denscombe (2007) argues that interviews lend themselves well to the collection of data based on opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences. Structured interviews provide a rigid framework that is used and offers a limited range of responses whereas a semi-structured interview has more flexibility in the direction the interview takes. Denscombe (2007) states:

‘With semi-structured interviews, the interviewer still has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered. However, with the semi-structured interview the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order the topics are considered, and, perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on issues raised by the researcher.’ (Denscombe, 2007: pp. 176)

1.6 Ethical Issues within the Research.

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines from 2011 were adhered to at all times and ethical principles as described in Denscombe (2007) were upheld those of participant protection, avoiding deception or mis-representation and informed consent. The confidentiality of participants’ data and its anonymous use was upheld at all times. Ethical issues of personal knowledge of some of the participants and the involvement between the subject and researcher should be considered. Interviewer effect (Denscombe, 2007) cannot totally be mitigated. Both interviewer and interviewee are serving head teachers of primary schools within the West Midlands. Advantages of this include a shared understanding of the social context in which interviewee and interviewer work. The disadvantage is that this may impact upon the honesty of information shared during the semi-structured interview. Non-probability sampling was used for this survey. The feasibility to contact a large number of samples for this study was not practicable and as a result of this, purposive sampling methods were used. Twenty head teachers, within the criteria identified above, were chosen

to apply the models discussed in the literature review to the data collected through interview.

1.7 Structure of the thesis.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter one serves as an introduction to the thesis, its main aims and research questions. Chapter two is a review of the literature already available. Chapter three is the research design that underpins the findings. Chapter four contains presentation of the findings. Chapter five contains discussion of the findings. Chapter six presents conclusions and recommendations followed by the appendices and list of references.

1.8 Reporting the findings.

The outcomes of this thesis will be reported in a discursive style, structured in themes relating to each of the research questions and drawing upon the literature reviewed. The work will synthesise what is currently available from a select number of key documents and compare and contrast this to the findings from the interviews. The purpose of the findings is to compare the career paths of early head teachers and evaluate their perceptions of their preparedness for headship following all they have experienced. It is intended that this information will be used to inform the research base and support schools and local Authorities in their succession plans and CPD for aspirant head teachers, in light of the potential leadership crisis facing schools over the next five years. In particular, the research may highlight implications for leadership development. In addition to the findings forming part of this Doctoral Thesis, an executive summary of the findings will be sent to the Chair of Governors of my school, along with copies to all participants. Headline anonymised

summaries will be sent to the service leaders for CPD in each of the four Black Country Local Authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton; a copy will be sent to Birmingham Local Authority.

Chapter Two.

Literature review.

2. Introduction.

The literature on leadership is diverse and multi-national in its origins. This review proposes to review and discuss, thematically, literature that pertains to the proposed research questions of:

‘How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?’

‘On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?’

‘Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?’

The first research question is broad in its nature and as such requires a number of themes to discuss fully the relevant issues around this question. The literature review will focus on all of the research questions and will explore each one thematically. The themes explored as a result of research question one will explore the routes to headship experienced by head teachers. Through this strand, look at the careers and lives of serving head teachers, their early career experiences and the transformational process that they underwent on their journey to headship. Part of this review will look at leadership style, beliefs and a further theme of this literature review is based around leadership and its role in bringing about change.

It is worth noting that none of the themes reviewed and explored is mutually exclusive, many elements overlap, and none should be taken in isolation.

The second research question will branch into themes relating to the transition into headship and the challenge, support and accountability of this role, leadership and effectiveness.

The third research question will branch into a theme of what currently exists in terms of support for the preparation into headship and will draw upon the literature reviewed to support questions one and two. These themes will then form the basis of a conceptual framework to analyse and interpret the preparation for headship as experienced by the survey interviewees. Consideration is also given to the way that the literature review shaped and influenced this thesis in terms of its key purpose and questions.

The literature reviewed within this thesis came from a search of the University of Birmingham's online catalogue, British Education Index and searches of the Journals School Leadership and Management; Management in Education and Educational Management Administration and Leadership supplemented the review. Key words and key authors surrounding the topics of leadership, headship, and transition to headship were put into journal and Internet based journal search engines to identify broad research on these areas. Refining of searches resulted in key works in the United Kingdom and globally in all sectors of education. ZETOC alerts were set up to be notified, in advance, of a range of journals resulting in a match to the keywords. Google Scholar and the on-line facility at www.leeds.ac.uk/educol provided further results through web-based citations and

conference papers. Some Internet web based sites such as the National College for School Leadership further supported this review.

This review is completed on a thematic basis rather than chronologically and draws on relevant literature selected from the wide range of literature available to provide a review of key authors and papers that are directly relevant to this thesis. It is important to identify whether the reviewed literature relates to research from the primary, secondary or other sector as it may well be that the context is relevant to this research. To support clarity and to avoid ambiguity or mis-representation, the table below (Table 1) identifies the sector related to the literature reviewed, separated by author and sector.

Table 1. Differentiation of sector relating to the literature reviewed, key sources of the literature review.

Author(s)	Response sector referred to within cited literature			
	Primary	Secondary	Mixed Primary and Secondary	International
Bright, T. and Ware, N. 2005			•	
Browne-Ferrigno, T. (2003)				•
Brundrett, M. (2006)			•	
Brundrett, M. and Crawford, M. eds. (2008)				•
Bullough, R. V. and Draper, R. J. (2004)		•		
Bush et al., (2006)			•	
Bush, T. and Jackson, D. (2002)				•
Busher, H. and Harris, A. (1999)		•		
Coleman, M. (2002)		•		
Coleman, M. (2005)		•	•	

Table 1. (continued) Differentiation of sector relating to the literature reviewed, key sources of the literature review.

Author(s)	Response sector referred to within cited literature			
	Primary	Secondary	Mixed Primary and Secondary	International
Crawford, M. and Earley, P. (2011)			•	
Darling-Hammond et al., (2007)				•
Day, C. and Bakioglu, A. (1996)		•		
Earley, P. and Bubb, S. (2013)		•		
Earley, P. and Weindling, D. (2007)			•	
Fuller, K. (2009)			•	
Glover et al., (1998)		•		
Gronn, P. and Ribbins, P. (1996)			•	
Gronn, P. and Ribbins, P. (2003)			•	
Hammersley-Fletcher, L. (2002)	•			
Holligan et al., (2006)			•	
Keltchemans, G. (1993)	•			
Kilburg, G.M. (2007)				•
Leithwood et al., (1999)				•
Naylor et al., (2006)			•	
NCSL, The (2011)			•	
Reeves et al., (2003)			•	
Rhodes, C. and Brundrett, M. (2006)	•			
Rhodes et al., (2008) and Rhodes et al., (2009)			•	
Saban, A. (2003)				•
SREB (2005) and SREB (2011)				•
Weindling, D. and Dimmock, C. (2006)			•	

2.1 The motivation to enter teaching – job, vocation or career?

Well-documented work on the careers and lives of senior leaders work from Day & Bakioglu (1996) Gronn (1999), Ribbins (2003) Earley & Weindling (2007) on lives and careers of senior leaders will be drawn upon in this theme. However, before looking closely at the lives and careers of these senior leaders, it is worth examining the route that individuals took into the teaching profession, their motives and motivation to teach. These motives and motivations may well yield some insight into the routes that leaders, maybe before any leadership aspirations were in place as a career goal, took to enter the teaching profession.

A review of the literature on motivation for teaching conducted through the early 1990s suggested that:

‘Altruistic, service-oriented goals and other intrinsic motivations are the source of the primary reasons entering teacher candidates report for why they chose teaching as a career’ (Brookhart and Freeman, 1992: p.46)

More recent studies (Pop & Turner, 2009; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Papanastasiou & Papanastasiou, 1998; Saban, 2003; Watt & Richardson, 2007)

indicate that the main reasons for choosing teaching as a career are in general, altruistic, intrinsic, and extrinsic reasons. Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) describe these categories as:

‘Altruistic reasons: deal with seeing teaching as a socially worthwhile and important job, a desire to help children succeed and a desire to help society improve.

Intrinsic reasons: cover aspects of the job activity itself, such as the activity of teaching children, and an interest in using their subject matter knowledge and expertise.

Extrinsic reasons: cover aspects of the job which are not inherent in the work itself, such as long holidays and salary’ (Kyriacou and Coulthard, 2000: pp.117)

Thomson et al., (2011) from an international perspective in their US paper define these characteristics. Intrinsic motivation as completing an activity for the 'inherent satisfaction' and in their paper it is argued that having intrinsic motivation can lead to longer term engagement and sustained effort of individuals. Thomson et al., (2011) suggest a simpler definition in terms of what people will do without external incentives; they define this as an activity for no reward other than the interest and enjoyment that accompanies them.

Thomson et al., (2011) in contrast to Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) explain extrinsic motivation as doing an activity for the attainment of a separable goal where this emphasises the instrumental value of the activity. They suggest that the quality of experience and performance are very different when individuals display extrinsic or intrinsic motivation for task engagement. Extrinsic motivations generally lead to short-range activity involvement while reducing long-range interest in a topic or an activity.

In an Australian study, Watt and Richardson (2007) analysed the motivations of students who entered the teaching profession in two academic institutions. Analysis of the two institutions showed motivations to enter teaching that were similar and identified with intrinsic value, social utility value, and perceived teaching ability. These factors emerged as the highest rated influences on the choice of a teaching career, followed by positive prior teaching and learning experiences and personal utility value.

Interestingly in their study, the motivations identified seemed to correlate with longitudinal outcome factors tapping planned teaching engagement and career development aspiration. Watt and Richardson make the exception of the personal utility factors, which they claim mostly demonstrated no relationship with measured outcomes. In the study they attest that

the social utility factors resemble altruism, which they link to previous studies into motivation to teach, which has been identified as an influential factor in choosing a teaching career. Watt and Richardson also suggest positive prior teaching and learning experiences, especially in the form of former influential teachers, to choosing a teaching career. Additionally, in studies reported in Thomson et al., (2011) a paper covering wide areas of Europe, Canada and Australia, respondents' most frequent answer for the motivation to teach centred around altruistic responses, the love of children/working with children. Spear et al., (2000) find in their review of research in England and Wales on what motivated teachers to enter the profession that intrinsic and altruistic motivations dominate the reasons for entering the profession among prospective teachers. It is worth noting too that few respondents chose one motivational factor, often combinations of two or three responses were selected that were then coded against the already defined categories. A duality of categorisation is given in Roness's (2010) work in Norway, looking at the factors that affected NQT and second year teachers entering the teaching profession. Here the meaningfulness of teaching, which is one of the most important single motivators for being a teacher, loads on the altruistic and intrinsic factors. Roness also makes the point of proposing a fourth category of motivational factor, the loves of teaching the subject matter itself although they make the point that this is a stronger contributory factor in a secondary setting to earlier years of schooling.

Whichever motivational factor or factors led the aspiring teachers to enter the teaching profession; this thesis is concerned with those who eventually go onto more senior leadership responsibilities with schools, notably the job of head teacher.

2.2 The path to headship.

The previously mentioned, well documented work on the careers and lives of senior leaders, work from Day & Bakioglu (1996) Gronn (1999), Ribbins (2003) Earley & Weindling (2007) on lives and careers of senior leaders, will be drawn upon in this theme. These models describe how four simple stages can be applied to analysing the path taken to senior leadership. Briefly, these stages consist of early pre-employment experiences; developmental leadership skills and capacity; time as head teacher or senior leader; remaining focussed or moving on to other challenges.

Both Gronn (1999) and Ribbins (2003) agree on a four-stage framework for analysing leadership as a career and the use of the terms formation, accession, and incumbency are common to both. The terminology used in stage four differs slightly, Gronn (1999) uses the term divestiture to describe the process of leaving headship, whilst Ribbins (2003) however, uses the term moving on. Earley and Weindling (2007) describe a different seven-stage model of the career stages of headship, from preparation for headship to plateau. There are more similarities and differences between the three models that will be discussed within the literature review.

Gronn (1999), Ribbins (2003), Earley and Weindling (2007) all agree with elements within the first stage of leadership as a career, although the nomenclature is different for Earley and Weindling (2007). Both Gronn (1999) and Ribbins refer to the formation stage, Earley and Weindling (2007) refer to stage zero – preparation prior to headship. This stage is characterised by social contexts, professional, informal and formal experiences of family, upbringing and peer groups. Gronn (1999) and Ribbins (2003) keep their formation stage to

strictly pre educational employment experiences whereas Earley and Weindling (2007) begin with the leader already in employment. Gronn (1999) states:

‘It is in this formative period, from infancy to early adulthood, that the scaffolding of a character structure ...is erected.’ (Gronn, 1999: pp.34)

Ribbins (2003) agrees and suggests that it is these early experiences that help form and shape the personality and basics of work style, attitude and outlook of potential future head teachers.

Stage two of the models by Gronn (1999) and Ribbins (2003) uses the term Accession to describe the fledgling potential leaders testing out their leadership skills and competing for positions of middle leadership to further demonstrate their potential skills. Ribbins (2003) describes this phase as:

‘...developing their capacity and testing their readiness in comparison with existing head teachers and likely rivals...they develop networks of peers, mentors and patrons and they learn to present themselves and jockey for position in the competition for preferment.’ (Ribbins, 2003: pp.64)

Gronn (1999) goes further to describe this period as building a sense of inner self-esteem that is expressed by the public face of efficacy, moving towards role mastery.

Stage three of the models by Gronn (1999) and Ribbins (2003) uses the term incumbency or the actual start of the headship whereas Earley and Weindling (2007) refer to this stage as entry and encounter. Day and Bakioglu (1996) in Gronn (1999) further subdivide this stage into four areas, those of initiation, development, autonomy and disenchantment (Gronn) or enchantment (Ribbins). The initiation stage describes the early months of headship where the new leader is gaining insight into the school context, community, workplace routines and the deep understanding of what is making the educational establishment as it is.

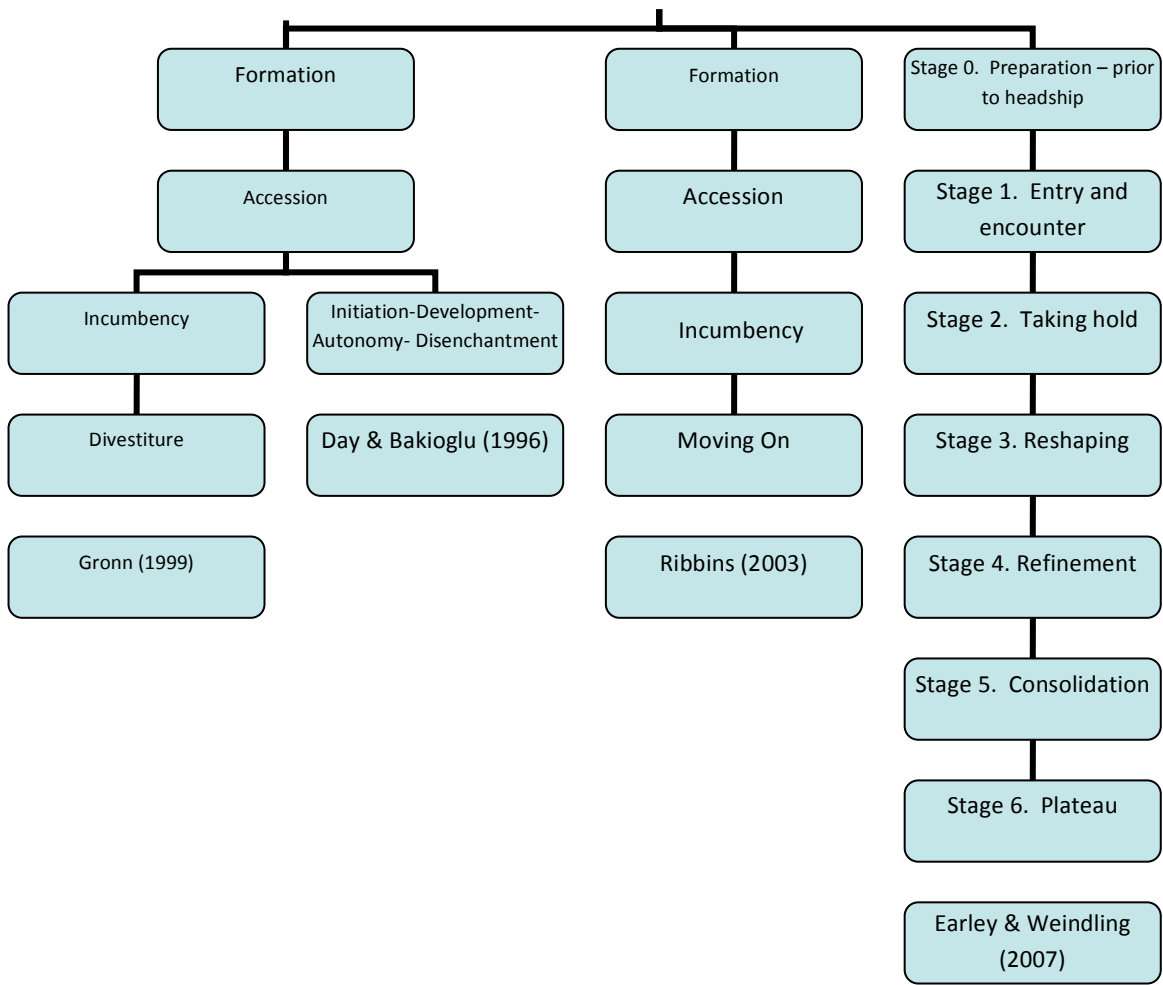
Development as defined by Gronn (1999) and Ribbins (2003) is characterised by a period of growth and enthusiasm and major change once the leader had become aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and its stakeholders. Autonomy is characterised by a phase where leaders feel confident, competent and that changes to systems, structure and staffing had ensured the school appears to run smoothly. In Earley and Weindling's (2007) model, they define Development by referring to stages 2→5 taking hold, reshaping, refinement and consolidation. Disenchantment is used by Day and Bakioglu (1996) to define the period at the end of incumbency where disillusionment and lack of commitment take over. Ribbins (2003), however, takes the opposite view of the final stage within incumbency and defines it as enchantment where those still in post are still enchanted with headship and the possibilities for further development work within their educational establishment.

Ribbins' (2003) positive stance remains for the final stage of the model – leaving headship, moving on (Ribbins); divestiture (Gronn) and Plateau (Earley and Weindling). Ribbins, however, accepts that should a leader have fallen into disenchantment they would face divestiture rather than reinvention.

The three models discussed present a similar picture for the stages in the lives and careers of senior leaders. Earley and Weindling's (2007) model does not provide sufficient analysis of the pre-employment period of senior leaders' journey to headship and so will not be used in the data analysis. Both Gronn (1999) and Ribbins' (2003) models provide similar frameworks to be applied to the data and to draw out any similarities and differences from the semi-structured interview with a senior leader. Indeed it is the model presented by Gronn and Ribbins that was used to shape part of the interview with the survey head teachers.

The flowchart below in figure 1. synthesises the stages within the models discussed as part of this literature review.

Figure 1: Synthesis of the models of the career models of headship discussed in the literature review.



The models discussed here would suggest an almost transformational move into headship.

These models are supported by the work of Browne-Ferrigno (2003) who argues strongly that there is almost an evolutionary process in the path to principalship. Browne-Ferrigno’s

research is based in the United States of America (USA) but it is reasonable to draw some parallels between the roles of principal compared to that of the head teacher in England.

The work of Browne-Ferrigno sought to review the professional growth of 18 participants in a principal Preparation Programme, not dissimilar in its aims to that of the NPQH programme. The data and findings from her case study suggested that four factors influencing the participants' growth into the role of principal be summarised as role conceptualisation of the principalship; initial socialisation into a new community of practice; role-identity transformation, and purposeful engagement based on career aspirations.

Browne-Ferrigno's transformative process of leadership takes account of:

- (1) Role conceptualisation which is related to participants' understanding about the roles and responsibilities of a school principal;
- (2) Initial socialisation into a new community of practice where transformation is related to understanding the need for changed professional behaviour appropriate to the role of principal;
- (3) Role-identity transformation where professional growth is indicated by the mind-set shift of participants to that of an educational leader;
- (4) Purposeful engagement based on career aspirations where professional growth is indicated by a desire to gain knowledge, confidence, support and the skill set required to achieve the transition to the role of principal.

An amended model of the Browne-Ferrigno (2003) transformative process is presented below, see figure 2. It is presented here to inform the conceptual framework and will be referred to and discussed within the discussion chapter.



Figure 2. Amended model of leadership development and transformation, a new conceptualisation (Browne-Ferrigno (2003) as modified by Kentish (2014)).

Browne-Ferrigno's (2003) work referred many times to the importance of professional practice and experiences that would support the transition to the role of principal. Indeed Gronn, Ribbins, Earley and Weindling all discuss the importance of the fledgling leaders testing out their new skills in readiness for headship. Browne-Ferrigno (2003) states as one key finding from the research:

'...a key element in the transformative process of becoming a principal is having opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge to professional practice during carefully developed and monitored internship experiences.'
(Browne-Ferrigno, 2003: pp. 470)

For these aspirant head teachers or principals to receive the experiences and professional practice they need, before making the transition to headship, it would follow that they need

to practice in the role they are in before making the transition. This practice is likely to be when they are middle or senior, but not head teacher, leaders in their educational institutions.

2.3 Leading from the middle in England, experimentation in preparation for headship.

Gunter (2001) defines Middle Managers as:

‘...teachers with a subject/department and/or pastoral responsibility within an educational organisation.’ (Gunter, 2001: pp. 106)

It is likely that potential aspirant head teachers or indeed those who do not realise that their career journey will lead to headship may well explore, rehearse and practice their embryonic or growing skill set as leaders here, during this middle management phase of their careers.

Gunter goes further to indicate that the boundary between senior and middle leaders is often different dependent upon the size of and management structure within different institutions. Whatever the structure or management responsibility, it is clear that the role of Middle Managers is becoming concerned with accountability of staff within their institution for policy, practice, implementation of these and ultimately standards as measured through test/task outcomes. (Gunter, 2001; Glover et al., 1998; Busher and Harris, 1999 reinforce this by arguing that:

‘UK research suggests that subject leaders can make a difference to departmental performance.’ (Busher & Harris, 1999: pp. 306)

This group of Middle Managers, responsible for teams or whole school co-ordination of an aspect or area represents a sharing of leadership across an educational institution.

Southworth (2002) states there is much more talk about shared leadership, leadership teams and distributed leadership than ever before.

The growth of the term shared or distributed leadership is noted by Gunter and Ribbins (2003, p. 132) and others (Gronn, 2000; Harris 2004; Spillane et al., 2001); Storey (2004) describes the concept of distributed leadership as:

‘Leadership activities should not be accreted into the hands of a sole individual but, on the contrary, they should be shared between a number of people in an organisation or team.’ (Storey, 2004: pp. 252)

The terms shared or distributed leadership tend to be used interchangeably. This notion of distributed leadership is important in providing aspirant head teachers the chance to effectively take responsibility for a project, probably relating to school improvement, under the guide of a more experienced or senior leader.

Harris (2004) argues that distributed leadership is a way of thinking about leadership in terms of:

‘the many rather than the few, and that it concentrates on engaging expertise within an organisation rather than seeking this through formal role or position.’ (Harris, 2004: pp. 14)

However, as Rhodes and Brundrett (2009) point out, some school leaders are better than others at distribution and, therefore, care must be taken to ensure that the staff to which leadership is distributed are sufficiently skilled to lead. They go further to state that there is, as yet, only limited empirical evidence of impact of leadership distribution on pupil performance.

This view is supported by Harris (2004) and Hartley (2007) whom make note that further research is needed to confirm the relationship between distributed leadership and pupil outcomes.

Nevertheless, Naylor et al., (2006) discuss the importance placed on Middle Leaders and their leadership through training programmes set up by the National College for School

Leadership (NCSL), now the National College for Teaching and Leadership. Here, Naylor et al., explain the specific purpose of the 'Leading from the Middle' (LftM) programme is to improve the leadership effectiveness of middle leaders so that they are better able to raise pupils' standards. Two of the five key elements in this programme are to deepen the knowledge and understanding of middle leaders in leading teaching and learning and to build capacity in their own areas through efficient and effective management of people and resources.

Hammersley-Fletcher (2002) worked to link the Teacher Training Agency Standards for Subject Leadership (TTA, 1998) to the actual role and perceived roles of those in schools. Part of her conclusion suggested that without the application of these standards and without an understanding of the role of subject/middle leaders then change and ultimately improvement would not take place. The TTA standards document is wide in scope and the skills/attributes are defined under four key themes including Teaching and Learning, this document describes the core purpose of a subject leader:

'To provide professional leadership and management for the subject to secure high quality teaching, effective use of resources and improved standards of learning and achievement for all pupils.' (TTA, 1998: pp. 4)

Yukl et al. (2002) synthesise wide ranging research papers on leadership behaviours and propose a three stage hierarchical model broadly around task, relations and change centred behaviours. The relations and change centred behaviours are most relevant to this study.

Wallace (2002), Hammersley-Fletcher (2002) and the TTA standards all define skills, attributes and tasks that constitute effective practice to bring about improvements in teaching and learning. Hammersley-Fletcher's research produces a useful Venn diagram

where perceptions of an effective subject/middle leader, compared to their role, show some commonality to Wallace's model of head teacher views of effective SMT (Senior Management Team) and Yukl's taxonomy (2002). These models can be compared to the TTA standards of effective subject leaders and is synthesised in the table contained in the appendices. (See Appendix 1).

Where there is consistency across the four models, the consistent elements have been used to draw across all four models/characteristics to identify some observable behaviours of middle managers. These behaviours, identified through observation, where middle managers are using these skills to secure improvements in teaching and learning – See Appendix 1.

Yukl (1999) argues that effective leaders draw upon a range of leadership styles and behaviours dependent on the situation that the establishment finds itself. Yukl (1999) also explains that for effective research on leadership behaviours it is worth considering whether the participants observed are able, willing and motivated to contribute.

It is also worth noting that this method of attempting to synthesise and generalise a 'tick-list' of generic skills and attributes used by middle leaders, in a disbursed leadership setting, is not without critics (Spillane et al., 2001). The structural and cultural barriers that make implementation of a dispersed leadership system difficult in some settings (Harris, 2004) cannot be discounted. Whilst there is strong evidence of the link between leadership and institutional performance, there is some discourse in what, how and why this leadership is enacted. Generic leadership programmes, 'accepted' ways of leadership enactment and synthesis of skills and attributes to form leadership development programmes is not

universally accepted as making a positive contribution to leadership development and leadership within institutions.

2.4 One way to lead? A contested view of leadership.

The research literature contains a myriad of papers that focus upon structured leadership development in England. Proponents of structured leadership development argue that the teaching of leadership and leadership skills supports the growth of talent for the future. Programmes such as Leading from the Middle, Leadership Pathways, NPQH and the more recent NPQML and NPQSL are becoming widely recognised as ‘leadership badges’ to support career development. However, this is a contested view of leadership. Some would argue that this leadership development is rooted in an enforced change agenda of homogenised, ‘one size fits all’ leadership development.

Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) argue that leadership development has become rather ‘orthodox’ and that this ‘orthodoxy’ is shaped by national policy agendas and is implemented despite the national context. The authors state:

‘We are troubled by the apparent canonisation of organisational leadership in schools and the eruption of a leadership industry to train and certify leaders, leading and the leadership in schools.’ (Fitzgerald and Gunter, 2008: p. 332)

Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) strongly contest the notion of homogenised leadership by questioning this presupposed orthodoxy and suggest teacher leadership may be illiberal in its conceptualisation (Fitzgerald and Gunter, 2008: p. 332). The authors argue that the leadership standards attributed to the associated development courses prescribe what leaders should be and what leaders (both aspirant and developing) should do at different

points in their journey to leadership. In doing so, this creates an organisational and leadership hierarchy that Fitzgerald and Gunter suggest is linked to nothing more than a management strategy and not a radical alternative for schools and leaders. Additionally they argue that performance management systems have added to the control of teachers' work and that this too does not easily stimulate leadership across and within schools. Furthermore, the authors argue that, as a result of the performance regime created by OFSTED, league tables and school-improvement partners being a functional leader means being 'on message'. This 'message' is derived from the orthodox leadership programmes and policy agendas diminish the authors' view of leadership, that of teachers who lead learning in productive and pedagogic ways. As Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) conclude:

'...What remains problematic is that some teachers remain labelled as 'leaders' or are afforded a 'leadership' task.... deeply problematic is the continued insistence that the capacity to influence and act is vested in an individual and shackled with hierarchical practices, labels and privilege' (Fitzgerald and Gunter, 2008: p. 338)

Gunter and Thomson (2009) return to this theme of generic, imposed leadership development and where they argue:

'...That the current leadership development is a form of make-over with direct expert control exercised through leadership development to effect permanent changes to the minds and bodies of leaders and through them, their schools.' (Gunter and Thomson, 2009: p. 471)

Gunter and Thomson (2009) contest the notion that schools, teacher leaders and head teachers should conform to the government's model of effective and efficient leadership. As the authors argue, leadership development programmes led to national standards that in turn replaced appraisal and informed performance management processes. Additionally,

the NCSL as a non-departmental body was set up to deliver a trained workforce and control knowledge production. Gunter and Thomson (2009) state:

‘They (head teachers) must become legitimate transformatory leaders, working within a paradigm of educational leadership and school improvement...Head teachers must adopt the preferred rules of the game or suffer the consequences of naming and shaming, or being summarily removed from post.’ (Gunter and Thomson, 2009: p. 474).

Gunter and Thomson (2009) argue that leaders who hold the knowledge counter or additional to that which is advocated have little chance to use it. The authors raise ‘fundamental concerns’ around the relationship between state, policy and the professional. They call for debate around what knowledge is back-grounded or fore-grounded, with what effects and in whose interest. As Gunter and Thomson (2009) conclude:

‘ Such discussions might well form the basis of new kinds of educational experiences...how to make the job of teaching more rewarding, and how to grow educational knowledge – rather than homogenise and ossify it through makeovers.’ (Gunter and Thomson, 2009: p. 480).

Other barriers also exist that would themselves oppose a linear view of structured leadership development in supporting aspirant leaders on their journey to headship including ethnicity and gender. Fuller (2009) and Coleman (2002) both note the under-representation of women in the secondary headship sector. Both authors note the societal barriers to women’s advancement to headship and also note the direct and indirect discrimination experienced by women both in the workplace and during the selection process. One barrier affecting the career paths of women relates to a career break taken for maternity leave. The models of leadership development and advancement to headship do not take into account ‘life getting in the way.’ Personal and familial events may well affect

the route taken to and the length of time in succeeding to headship. Supporting aspirant leaders who have taken a career break may well provide one partial solution the succession planning and leadership crisis.

Thomson (2009) also raises questions centred around the notion of accepted models of leadership, leadership development and the impact of these on the headship crisis. One of Thomson's arguments stems from the notion of 'risk' and the dilemma faced by head teachers, institutions, policy makers and politicians in the management of the perceptions of the risk associated with leadership decisions and the direction practice takes. She argues that a consequence of seeking to prevent and minimise the risk may be a reduced opportunity for learning or improvement (Thomson, 2009: pp. 8). As Thomson (2009) states:

'No matter how risky actual circumstances and plans are, and no matter how uncertain leaders/managers feel on the inside, they must appear to be in control. But if there is one thing that educators know it is that learning is often associated with risks. The assimilation of existing knowledge is integral to learning, but an overemphasis on regurgitation of prescribed material leads to a failure to experiment, to dream of possibilities, to explore potential avenues and to face the reality of making a mistake.' (Thomson, 2009: pp. 8).

Furthermore, Thomson (2009) also questions some of the currently accepted solutions to the leadership crisis such as talent identification, aspirant leaders' self-disclosure, succession programmes and 'grow your own' talent programmes particularly in more difficult to fill posts and locations. The first three points are discussed later within this chapter (see 2.5); Thomson argues that 'grow your own' leadership talent programmes may benefit aspirant leaders who learn from good practice but equally, aspirant leaders may well learn less desirable practices. Thomson also questions how well the skills of home-grown leadership

programmes are transferrable to disparate settings in other locations and suggests that this potential solution may well promote 'unintended barriers' for career progression to headship beyond the local environment.

Despite the differing views of leadership development and routes to headship, most agree on the importance of on the job training at a variety of levels of leadership. It is likely that middle managers, who may or may not become head teachers in the future, will have, through some means of delegation or leadership sharing, 'had a go' at bringing about some institutional change – more than likely with the intention of increasing some form of measurable outcome. The UK Government White Paper, The Importance of Teaching (DFE, 2011) contains eighty-one pages of text; seventy-five of these pages contain some reference to a change for Government or departmental policy and ultimately schools. 2011 is not unique, and schools are well used to the pressures of National Government to change policy and practice. It could be argued that it is within these early leadership experiences, fledgling leaders continue to develop their skills and attributes of leadership that contribute, ultimately, in their journey to and preparation for headship. It is on this basis that a review of change, change management and leadership are relevant to this thesis and literature review.

2.5 Bringing about improvements.

Wallace (2003) suggests that successfully bringing about complex educational change is affected by a number of key factors. One significant factor he suggests that is missing from many research theories, is ambiguity. Ambiguity of the perceived intention(s) of change and the resulting changes implemented by stakeholders. Ambiguity, Wallace (2003) suggests can

cross institutional barriers and be exacerbated by, for example, change across a Local Education Authority. Wallace expands on the idea of ambiguity by suggesting that three key factors increase this (ambiguity) namely limited control over stakeholders and their responses; individuals' limited awareness of what is happening and contradictory beliefs and values of individual stakeholders and groups. The greater the change, the greater the potential ambiguity, yet as Wallace points out, large changes do take place. Wallace (2003) proposes a model of factors affecting change, much of the model draws upon the individuals, groups and allegiances that affect or are affected by the change(s) implemented. Wallace identifies a model for managing change, linking leadership and management into the theme for helping to reduce the potential effects of ambiguity on this process and part of this model he entitles orchestration. Orchestration, he defines, is the organisation and steering towards a desired outcome and is limited, initially, to a select few senior managers, deciding the right things to do (Bennis and Nanus', 1985). He argues that the orchestration stands in opposition to more popular theories of distributed leadership and its (positive) effect on change and change management, initially because of the few selected leaders involved. Fullan (2001) proposes a model of effective change process initiation, implementation and institutionalisation. He conceptualises a single change event to define these stages but readily acknowledges that multiple innovations are often and continuously occurring, and these factors occur across departments, institutions and wider local and national areas. Where Wallace (2003) talks of orchestration, Fullan uses the term initiation and explains that there is a variety of factors that affect the initiation of an event with institutional internal pressures and those from external sources such as community or local government. Similarly to the model proposed by Wallace (2003), Fullan's theory suggests the

implementation phase is affected by a number of factors such as the need, clarity and complexity of the charge, mainly internal to the institution and those local and external to the institution such as a community and local government. Regardless of the number of leaders involved in the initial decision making to affect any particular change, developing other stakeholders' beliefs in the proposed change(s) and their implementation requires the culture building and acceptance of proposed changes. (Wallace, 2003).

Where Wallace talks of culture building and acceptance, Lumby and Foskett (2008) point out culture is a difficult concept to define as range of factors impacting on the notion of culture and as they attest:

‘Metaphorically culture is like the air we breathe; all around us, vital, and yet difficult to discern and change.’ (Lumby and Foskett, 2008: p. 1)

That aside, many refer to culture as a key variable in leadership and change (Gronn, 2001; Fullan 1993, 2001.). Lumby and Foskett (2008) define culture as being unique to any institution and shows itself through concepts, languages behaviours and usually, put simply 'The way we do things around here' (Lumby and Foskett, 2008, p3). The individual nature of institutions resulting in different and varied cultures was synthesised into a typology of five schools by Stoll and Fink (1996) as moving, cruising, strolling, struggling and sinking. Lumby and Foskett (2008) express some concern at the somewhat simplistic categorisation of culture under these terms but what is clear is that an understanding of culture and its effect on any institution are important-if change is to be made successfully, Appendix 2 shows a synthesis and comparison of successful change models. As Lumby and Foskett (2008) argue:

‘At the operational scale, the leader may focus on the culture within the institution in order to facilitate the achievement of institutional improvement, with culture conceptualised as an agent of change.’ (Lumby and Foskett, 2008, p.11)

Culture alone and getting the culture right will not in itself bring about effective change, it is the leaders and their teams that bring about the necessary changes. Fullan (2002) argues strongly that a 'culture change principal' (CCP) who sees the big picture and organisational transformation through people and teams is through the associated conditions created the way to successful and sustainable change. Throughout his work and research, Fullan makes it clear that a strong (internal) moral compass, of the leaders bringing about change, pervades his 'lessons' from this (1999) work. Many agree (Stoll and Fink, 1996; Wallace, 2003; Fullan, 2002; Lumby and Foskett, 2008) that leadership, leadership capacity and succession planning are key to sustained change and system improvement. As Fullan (2002) states:

'The organisation cannot flourish (or at least not for long) by the actions of the top leaders alone.' (Fullan, 2002, p.11)

He is adamant that a spread of leaders, at many levels, is needed to deal with and manage successfully change and continuing change.

Fullan (2001) argues that people in every setting must work together to do what is worthwhile and that this, to be successful, must come from within the organisation. These worthwhile changes result in 'doing the right thing' (p. 270) but problems, events that require change, do not stay solved and for true institutional change to succeed over the long term, organisations must learn to do the right thing over and over again. Fullan (2001) advocates this 'doing the right thing over and over' (p. 270) as the true definition of a learning organisation. In a more recent paper Fullan (2006) argues that the knowledge shared by the people who are charged with bringing about change must be actively shared by the people engaged in using this knowledge to bring about the planned change else there is an increased risk of failure. As Holmes et al., (2013) argue taking the time to ensure that

all stakeholders have achieved meaningful trust through building social capital is important for successful change. However, trust is built by taking an appropriate amount of time and it is important to support finding meaningful solutions to the changes argued for within institutions. It is not always easy to take appropriate time when external pressures come to bear upon institutions to bring about changes that are measureable for their impact. As Clement (2013) concludes in her paper, a school oriented approach where the personnel within take charge of any reforms or change is likely to bring about more substantial and long lasting change.

Strategic planning from the leadership and leadership teams can support with signposting the organisation toward doing the right thing. Both Johnson and Scholes (1993) and Dobson and Starkey (1994) advocate the strategic plan after analysis of the current position, internal and external factors.

It is not always possible to guarantee that the correct strategy for change can be selected; there is always a mixture of judgement, analysis and logical deduction involved. There are, however, criterion for selection that allow the best-fit choice to be made, suitability (in relation to internal and external environments), feasibility (how will it work in practice?); and acceptability (will the stakeholders buy into the plan?). As Wallace (2003) argues, a programme of differentiated support, identified on a needs basis would best support effective change.

Mujis and Harris (2003) state:

‘Effective or purposeful leadership is generally accepted as being a central component in securing and sustaining school improvement.’

Whatever the structure or leadership responsibility, it is clear that the role of Middle Managers is becoming concerned with accountability of staff within their institution for changes to policy, practice, implementation of these changes and ultimately standards as measured through test/task outcomes. (Gunter, 2001; Glover et al., 1998; Busher and Harris, 1999) reinforce this by arguing that:

‘UK research suggests that subject leaders can make a difference to departmental performance.’ (Busher and Harris, 1999: pp. 306)

This group of Middle Managers, responsible for teams or whole school co-ordination of an aspect or area represents a sharing of leadership across an educational institution.

Southworth (2002) states there is much more talk about shared leadership, leadership teams and distributed leadership than ever before.

The growth of the term shared or distributed leadership is noted by Gunter and Ribbins (2003, p. 132) and others (Gronn, 2000; Harris 2004; Spillane et al., 2001). If the key to bringing about effective change required at the institution is the responsibility of the leadership team and team leaders then the value of integrated and worthwhile leadership, effective planning, communication and its effects on culture cannot be underestimated. However, as Rhodes and Brundrett (2009) point out, some school leaders are better than others at distribution and, therefore, care must be taken to ensure that the staff to which leadership is distributed are sufficiently skilled to lead.

In England, experience, teaching credentials and skills alone cannot lead to headship without first attaining the National Professional Qualification for headship (NPQH). NPQH was a mandatory qualification for first time head teachers and must be completed before appointment as head teacher and had been in place. Although available as a programme

since 1997, NPQH became a mandatory requirement from 2004 for first appointments to headship. The requirement for NPQH as a pre-requisite to headship was removed in January 2012 by the Secretary of State for Education at that time, Michael Gove. NPQH was the only mandatory qualification for headship; a teaching qualification is not required, although a head teacher with no teaching qualification is still rare, and as such the role of NPQH in developing aspirant head teachers is of note here, as is the identification of potential leaders of the future.

2.6 Leaders of the future – how is this talent recognised?

As Rhodes (2012a) states in his paper, it is difficult to detect a clear and universally accepted understanding of the term ‘talent management’. Rhodes argues that the general assumption seems to be that it is possible to know the people and posts within an organisation essential to success and that high-performing people can be secured for these posts. In the article, Rhodes quotes from Lewis and Heckman (2006) who suggest three possible understandings of talent management:

(1) Talent management as a collection of Human Resource Management practices such as recruitment, development and succession management;

(2) Talent management as a focus on developing and growing internal talent pools as part of succession and workforce planning;

(3) Talent management with a focus on the direct management of talented individuals, both high performers and those with high potential, who are to be encouraged and rewarded perhaps at the expense of low performers who may be replaced by those with greater perceived talent.

(4) Talent management as the identification of key roles rather than key individuals. This is a strategic approach involving high-ability talent pool development to fill these key roles coupled with mechanisms to ensure their continued commitment to the organisation. (1-3 Lewis and Heckman, 2006 in Rhodes, 2012: pp.443; 4 Collings and

Mellahi, 2009 2006 in Rhodes, 2012a: pp.443)

As Rhodes et al., (2008) discuss, one of the key factors considered important by all groups within education settings as almost a pre-requisite to future leadership potential is the core ability of the individual as a teacher. Competency, or lack of, would seem to be held in high regard by middle and senior leaders as an important core skill. For some, it may be a badge of honour, without which there could be far less professional credibility to lead, manage and bring about change in institutions. The authors identify a list of 20 core skills or attributes, identifiable from performance in and around work based tasks, which in addition to the accepted core competency of teaching may form an early indicator of leadership potential. The authors place these characteristics as potential skills and attribute to develop aspirant senior and middle leaders to nurture the talent pool within organisations, see table 2 below.

Table 2. The perceived importance to heads, middle leaders and classroom teachers of 20 characteristics that may be indicative of leadership talent from Rhodes et al., (2008) pp. 320.

Rank order	Characteristic of leadership talent	Number of respondents	Number of respondents as % of total cohort
1	Has people skills	288	67.13
2	Has good communication skills	262	61.07
3	Has vision	223	51.98
4	Has the respect of staff	215	50.12
5	Has the respect of pupils	164	38.23
6	Possesses professional values	146	34.03
7	Shows enthusiasm	128	29.84
8	Shows initiative	127	29.60
9	Can deal with stress	93	21.17
10	Good self-organization	85	19.81
11	Works hard	82	19.11
12	Is a very good teacher	74	17.25
13	Has energy	64	14.92
14	Shows confidence	59	13.75
15	Is a competent teacher	33	7.69
16	Has good subject knowledge	27	6.29
17	Has experience of project leadership	12	2.80
18	Has an 'aura'	11	2.56
19	Shows ambition	10	2.33
20	Accesses development courses	8	1.86

They conclude:

‘In short, schools should consider the identification and development of leadership talent as part of getting the right person in the right leadership job at the right time. Locating leadership talent identification as the centre-piece of succession management, incumbent leaders can begin to create the school as an excellent training ground for leadership development, enabling supply, succession and continuity.’ (Rhodes et al., 2008: pp. 332)

Like Bush (2008) agrees, in his editorial entitled ‘Developing Educational Leaders—Don’t Leave it to Chance’, schools, organisations and wider policy makers and Governments should consider strongly, in light of the predicted worldwide leadership crisis, strategies to identify leadership talent to develop the senior leaders of the future. Identification of leadership talent is further supported by Macbeath (2006). Here Macbeath (2006) argues that seeking internal talent within schools and institutions should complement a wide view outside organisations too. He argues that:

‘Successful companies are those which create room for talent to grow, that build a high-performance culture, combining a strong performance ethic with an open and trusting environment. Informal feedback, coaching, and mentoring are described as enormous developmental levers. At the same time, it is important to be always on the prowl for new ideas, looking in new ways and in new places.’ (Macbeath, 2006: pp. 201)

Alongside the place of talent being recognised and identified by established senior leaders, Rhodes et al., (2008) identify through focus group analysis, a number of factors that too, may impact upon leadership talent identification.

- (1) The locus of responsibility for longer-term career planning of middle leaders and classroom teachers;
- (2) The place of more rigorous needs analysis for middle leaders and classroom teachers;
- (3) The place of self-disclosure on the part of middle leaders and classroom teachers with respect to their desire to further develop their leadership potential;

(4) The degree of reliance on 'gut feeling' or 'national standards' to ensure that a person seeking further promotion of their leadership talent shows the right skills and qualities. (Rhodes et al., 2008: pp. 329)

This would suggest that aspirant middle and senior leaders should consider 'positioning' themselves for leadership positions by approaching, perhaps the head teacher or other appropriate line-manager, to express a desire for and their own self-perception of readiness to take on or apply for the role of greater leadership responsibility. Self-perception of readiness for leadership is linked to the notion of self-belief and the importance of self-belief in aspirant or in-post leaders is discussed further in Rhodes' (2012a) paper where he argues that self-belief plays a part identify transformation and enactment of leadership. As Rhodes argues, the understanding of self-belief and its role in leadership enactment remains unclear and more work is needed in this area, however, this emergent characteristic may well support its integration into current theoretical frameworks for leadership identity and transformation.

As the authors discuss, a 'gut feeling' of a candidate's readiness for or suitability for leadership positions seems to play a part in the identification of talent but as the authors argue, a 'gut feeling' is not a measurable indicator for readiness or suitability for leadership. It may be that the 'gut-feeling' alongside an analysis of performance through more formal structures, such as the Performance Management arrangements may well yield a more rounded view of a candidates suitability for greater leadership responsibility. Furthermore, a 'gut-feeling' may well be a destructive influence where leaders associate this feeling with candidates whom leaders identify as resonating with their own belief, style and aptitudes, those whom leaders see as similar to themselves.

Kelchtermans' (1993) study of teachers' career stories identified five components of the professional self, consisting of self-image, self-esteem, job motivation, task perception and future perspective. It is reasonable to draw a parallel here to the transformation of senior leaders into the role of head teacher whereby insecurities in self-image and self-esteem may contribute to the success or otherwise of the transition to and role-conceptualisation of headship. Increasing self-esteem has been linked positively to an individual having success in mastery of a task. As Rhodes (2013) argues, self-esteem may well play a role in the successful transformation but then so too does self-efficacy. The two terms are indeed linked, self-esteem or 'how well am I doing as a head teacher?' and self-efficacy 'how able am I to do the job of the head teacher?' are related. Self-esteem is built through success in tasks, realised through role mastery; self-efficacy is built as a product of the success in tasks or role; as Rhodes (2013) argues, increased self-efficacy may well be a positive catalyst in the transformation to headship.

Regardless of the mechanism of the aspirant leader's self, realised or observed and identified readiness for senior leadership, a number of leadership development programmes have been available from commercial providers and the NCSL. One such leadership development programme is the National Professional Qualification for headship (NPQH) that for over a decade has been a benchmark for identification and 'seal of approval' for readiness for headship.

2.7 The role of NQPH in headship preparation.

The National Professional Qualification for headship (NPQH) emerged in 1997 following work by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and the National College for School Leadership

(NCSL) and continues through the now twice re-named National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (NCLSCS) and its most recent iteration National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). The programme, now in its third iteration and currently being consulted upon (Brundrett, 2006; NCLSCS, 2011) provides what was a mandatory qualification for those wishing to embark upon their first headship. Serving head teachers without NPQH are exempt from the qualification requirements. NPQH has been available since 1997 but only became a mandatory requirement for new head teachers from 1st April 2004 with the caveat of a transition arrangement where those aspirant head teachers on the course were allowed to be appointed to headship up to 31st March 2009 (DfES, 2004; Brundrett, 2006). For the respondents within this study, NPQH was a mandatory requirement for their headship appointment and as such there is a clear argument for its inclusion here. Further work on the importance or otherwise of NPQH may be required in the future, if the role of NPQH diminishes from leadership development.

This programme is set within the backdrop of accounts and models of leadership development (Bolam, 2004; Brundrett, 2006). Bolam (2004) uses the terms 'ad hoc provision' to describe those development programmes or support packages available in the 1960's and early 1970's; 'towards coherence and co-ordination' in the 1970's, 80's and 90's and a 'National College' from 2002. However, as Brundrett (2006) points out, a variety of university and Governmental initiatives took place from the 1960's to 1990's including work to develop Masters and Doctoral level programmes along with providers of in-service training. In the mid 1990's responsibility for the programmes led, briefly, to the DFES and TTA controlling the development programmes, and this subsequently changed to the NCSL in 2000. NCSL's 2001 Leadership Development Framework outlined five areas of leadership

development emergent, established, experienced, advanced, and consultant leaders.

Brundrett (2006) argues this model was synthesised and developed from the previous six years and had been based upon preparatory, induction and further training for head teachers. Brundrett also acknowledged that a number of programmes existed and evolved to develop, support and induct leaders and leadership in schools. While this period provides an important narrative to headship, leadership preparation and support during the 1960's to 1990's this falls outside the remit of this thesis to discuss more widely here.

The National Professional Qualification for headship (NPQH) has been running in England for over a decade. It was introduced as an idea in 1995 by the then Conservative government, implemented in 1997 and "was self-avowedly designed to provide rigorous and above all practical training for senior managers in educational institutions" (Brundrett 1999, pp. 497). Early versions of the programme were criticised for its reliance on a competence-based system (Revell, 1997), some felt that there was a danger that the qualification might become too academically focussed (Poutney, 1997). Bush (1998) questioned weak links between NPQH and specialist Masters degrees in leadership and management.

It has had several revisions in the intervening years, but a major revamp of the programme was undertaken by the (then) National College for School Leadership (NCSL) and piloted during 2008/2009 with 150 participants. Crawford and Earley's review of this revised pilot (2011) reported encouraging preliminary findings from the 150 participants that included its focus on personalised learning, the supportive environment offered by providers, its various components (in particular coaching, placement schools, online aspects, etc.) and a timeline that fits in with trainee head teacher aspirations. In particular, needs identification and personalisation was a clear strength of the programme and the only barriers to learning

related to individual learning styles and preferences. However, Ribbins (1997) and Gunter (2001) have questioned whether what in their view is a generic model underpinning the NPQH or other leadership programmes can cater for the complexity and changing leadership face of headship. The NCSL has been quick to respond to criticisms of NPQH (Brundrett, 2006) and indeed have adapted the leadership learning models that underpin the programme.

Bush and Jackson (2002) reviewed the preparation for school leadership through a wider international perspective. Analysing the NCSL's study visits carried out at the time of their formation during the period when the college first looked to develop its policy, research and programmes. Bush and Jackson (2002) note that of all the leadership development centres visited in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden and the United States of America almost all of the centres operated programmes for aspiring principals. However, the main distinction between the systems and centres is that some systems have mandatory programmes, and some are available, yet not compulsory. In this paper, the authors note the diversity of provision across the nine countries and fifteen centres visited with many courses for aspiring, beginning and experienced principals but few examples of a coherent programme for all three. Bush & Jackson (2002) argue that, despite globalisation, different nations have developed differing approaches to leadership development and warn against the inherent dangers of transplanting one model for one country and system to another because of different political, social and professional contexts. However, there is an acknowledgment that trends appearing in England and the provision for leadership development may be becoming increasingly important elsewhere. The authors conclude:

‘There can be no single model of good practice but sharing ideas and plans provides rich potential for mutual learning’ (Bush and Jackson, 2002: pp.427)

Whether in England or Internationally, Bush & Jackson identify some common areas of content from the programmes delivered at the centres visited and note that there is considerable overlap in the structure and content of courses, see table 3 below.

Table 3. Content of educational leadership programmes for aspiring principals (Bush & Jackson, 2002. pp. 421)

<i>North Carolina (LPAP)</i>	<i>Ontario (PQP)</i>	<i>England (NPQH)</i>
Leadership	Leadership	Strategic direction and development
Communication and public relations	Communication strategies	
Personnel management	Human resources	Leading and managing staff
Self knowledge	Interpersonal skills	
Curriculum	School programme	Teaching and learning
Students	Students with exceptionalities	
	Resource management	Resource management
Technology		

Whilst the similarities and differences of the international leadership preparation programmes are recognised here, it is beyond the remit of this thesis to discuss these further, the English NPQH and its effect on preparedness for headship will be discussed further. All of the respondents will have experienced and have gained the NPQH qualification and as such, there is merit in examining this programme and its place in preparing candidates for headship.

There are a number of well documented reviews of the perceptions of effectiveness of NPQH on the transition to and early career of head teachers, Brundrett (2006); Bush (1998); Crawford and Earley (2011); Lodge (1998); Rhodes et al., (2009). It is clear from these

reviews that NCSL continues to look to ensure that the programme offered meets the needs of aspiring head teachers and indeed changes to keep pace with educational policy, politics and practice. Meeting the needs of everyone is no easy task, and it could be argued that the programme administrators and designers are constantly in a state of flux, forced in some way to play 'catch up' with the ever-changing demands of the educational landscape. Many of the papers listed above call for further study, greater analysis or indeed make the valid point that there is limited empirical evidence of the true and statistically valid effectiveness of the leadership development programmes on leadership effectiveness itself and pupil outcomes. What is clear from the literature is that there is a growing sense of the effectiveness of programmes with aims as NPQH, if nothing else from the perceptions of the course participants themselves who cite their feelings about their own preparedness for headship as enhanced, directly as a result of NPQH. However, it is also clear that, for the many positive perceptions of NPQH, there are equal numbers of negative perceptions. Criticisms seem centred around the lack of personalisation, inability to deviate from a given script of the planned programme, poor quality training providers and lengthy time taken to assimilate and gather evidence toward assessments. One strong strand emerging from the literature is the view of participants on the time spent with experienced colleagues as part of the course facilitation, giving a genuine 'warts and all' view of the job of headship itself. In their review from 2006 of the perceptions of head teachers on the headship Induction Programme, Holligan et al., (2006) conclude:

'The challenge of devising a professional development support programme—at a national level—is therefore an enormous one. Obviously for any programme to be successful, it is going to have to be extremely flexible and adaptable, generic and specific. There may be some common elements needed—time management is perhaps one such— but the essence of it is likely to involve individualised support

and advice.’ (Holligan et al., 2006: pp.117)

2.8 The challenges of Early headship.

Whichever model of career progression is used as a benchmark for comparison of the stages of development of head teachers, different terminology essentially relates to similar stages of early headship. Of the models discussed and presented above, three terms are used to describe early headship; these terms are the incumbency (Gronn and Ribbins, 1996), encounter (Earley and Weindling, 2007) or initiation (Day and Bakioglu, 1996). These terms, whilst different, are comparable to those first days, weeks and months of headship. In a report for NCSL written by Hobson et al., (2002), Issues for early headship, had identified the main problems of early headship. The authors identified issues of: feelings of professional isolation and loneliness; dealing with the legacy of previous incumbents; practice and style of the previous head teacher; dealing with multiplicity of tasks, managing time and priorities; managing the school budget; dealing with ineffective staff; implementing new government initiatives; problems with school buildings and site management. (Hobson et al., 2002, p. ii)

Bright and Ware (2003) noted that head teachers felt they were poorly prepared for assuming responsibility in areas such as finance. In their review for the NCSL, they identify two areas of financial responsibility that the relatively newly in-post head teachers felt less prepared, financial planning and managing the whole school budget. They identify two factors that respondents to their survey noted as possible omissions for this area of knowledge and experience, simply that as a deputy, this was an area either not experienced as part of their pre-headship role and responsibility or that it was a difficult area for them to experience. As Bright and Ware note (2003), there is a slight shift in perception of the need

for financial accountancy expertise more than traditional educational values. Also in their survey, more than 90 respondents identified, as a development need, a gap in knowledge or skills for essentially practical tasks that these respondents found themselves needing to deal with but felt that they did not have the necessary skills, expertise or experience to successfully manage. These included: Selecting and interviewing staff including non-teaching; Grounds / building maintenance; Staff interviews relating to capability procedures; Personnel issues e.g. directed time issues, exact roles of threshold and management point; Managing the plethora of initiatives; LIG [Leadership Incentive Grant]; Workforce Reform; Threshold; recruitment / retention; Handling the paperwork; Disability Rights Act / inclusion; Health and safety; Bright and Ware (2003) chose to summarise the feeling of their respondents by merely indicating that their need was for information about the minor/day-to-day activities that take up the majority of your working week (as a head teacher)

Holligan et al., (2006) completed a study of 357 head teachers, part of the study looked at this group's conceptualisation of their needs of their leadership roles. Their analysis generated the following eight themes as being significant by the head teachers: collaboration; school improvement; training; standards and achievement; social inclusion; financial matters; time-management; leadership.

Weindling and Dimmock (2006) in a longitudinal study of over 20 years concluded that the challenges facing head teachers now are similar in nature to those over two decades ago. They attest that head teachers now are far more prepared for the challenges of the role by the introduction of formal leadership development programmes, however, they also state that no amount of formal or informal experience or training programme can provide sufficient induction or preparation for the demanding role that the post of head teacher

most certainly is. They draw a parallel between the challenges of isolation, loneliness, management of task and time that are as prevalent and relevant today as they were 20 years go. It would appear that, despite the training programmes in place, experience and expertise gained in roles prior to appointment to headship, no single programme or set of experiences can fully prepare the newly incumbent head teacher for the demands of the role. However, as Leithwood et al. (1999) suggest:

History has taught us ... that the meaningfulness of each approach to leadership is also significantly context dependent. Truly productive leadership depends not only on engaging in commonly helpful practices, it also depends on recognising and responding to the unique challenges and features presented by particular types of organisational contexts (and each school has its own context). (Leithwood et al., 1999: p. 23)

As Earley and Bubb (2013) conclude in their study of direct observation of New head teachers, no leadership programme can fully prepare for the challenges of headship and a major transition occurs during that first year. In their paper they argue that there is a need for newly in-post head teachers to reflect upon all that they are doing and advocate a system for supporting this reflexivity of observation.

The literature reviewed above suggests that role socialisation, acclimatisation and conceptualisation, 'on the job' `about the role itself provides the most effective training for the role. Despite the challenges of the role, it would appear that many head teachers get through this difficult period of adjustment. There is merit in examining, from the perspective of head teachers who have been through this transition phase, what support they found useful in navigating successfully this period.

2.9 Leadership apprenticeship – learning from and with an experienced head teacher.

Earley (2009) argues and discusses the importance of workplace CPD, separate and distinct

to workshop or 'courses' CPD. He argues that the workplace learning can take a variety of forms through formal and informal experiences. In this work he cites examples where workplace CPD can be a positive or negative experience and notes that there are few examples where this use of workplace 'apprenticeships' form a deliberate training strategy. In England, a recent example of a workplace style CPD is that of the Future Leaders Programme. In this programme, an aspirant 'Future Leader' is attached to the senior leadership team of a complex school, mentored by the head teacher and provided with a range of leadership experiences and activities. Earley was originally charged with evaluating the Future Leaders programme in 2008 but in a follow up paper from 2009, looking to maximise the effectiveness of these apprenticeship style workshop placements, he concludes:

'Follow-up support from coaches was crucially important and was used, albeit to varying degrees, to promote self-reflection on performance and this was aided by reference to an urban leadership competence matrix. Our future leaders learn from the experiences accrued during their internships but they learn more from having opportunities to reflect on those experiences and time needs to be made for this which is enabled through regular meetings with coaches and mentor heads.' (Earley, 2009: p. 318)

The Centre for Organisational Research (2001) identified a number of principles embodying high-impact leadership development systems or approaches that help leadership learning. It found that leadership development programmes:

- Made use of action and experiential learning to make the learning process 'real'.
- Encouraged leaders to take responsibility for planning and implementing their

own learning experiences to meet their needs.

- Encouraged development at three levels: self, team and organisation.
- Had a core mission statement or all-encompassing purpose around which the System and programmes were built, which drives all initiatives and behaviours, is aligned with corporate strategy and is clearly communicated to all staff.
- Provided a culture that was supportive of leadership development at all levels and encourage multidisciplinary experiences 'to drive breakthrough thinking and innovation' (through such activities as job rotations, global assignments and development assignments).
- Made use of mentoring to help leaders develop leaders and assessed the development of leaders from a number of different perspectives (e.g. peer reviews, review by superior and subordinates).
- Made good use of technology and e-learning.

NCSL's review of the experiences of new Heads in cities, among other things, concluded:

'New heads in the study felt that they had benefited most from a wealth of experience in assistant and deputy headship roles and referred to the benefits of working with heads who had been concerned with their professional and career development. Experience under heads who have seen it as part of their role to develop the deputy for headship by giving them stretching tasks and sharing responsibilities was very important.' (NCSL, 2011: p.5)

Leadership apprenticeship programmes are not unique to England, the work of Reeves et al., (2010) on the use of CPD in the Scottish Qualification for headship (SQH); the US The Stanford Project on field-based internships and the work of Darling-Hammond et al. 2007. The Southern Region Education Board (SREB) (2005) in the US reported:

‘A quality internship program creates the opportunity for aspiring principals to demonstrate, under the guidance of an experienced and trained school leader and a university supervisor, that they have mastered the necessary knowledge and skills to change schools and classrooms and can apply these skills effectively in a school setting where they must work with real teachers to accelerate student achievement.’ (SREB, 2005.)

In the SREB’s recent review from 2012, they report that in twelve states their organisation covers, these twelve states now have an established principal field-based leadership programme fully in place to support leadership development and succession planning.

Intern or apprenticeship style learning placements are not without criticism and as Crawford and Earley (2011) discuss, the variability in the contextual situation surrounding the host placement. The variability in the senior teams hosting principals and the inherent skills of these staff as facilitators and their skills in coaching and mentoring can prove a barrier to effective leadership learning.

One of the important features of these workplace apprenticeships is the role of a coach and mentor during and after the placement; there is some merit to exploring the role of coaching and mentoring in leadership career development.

2.10 The role of Coaching and mentoring, a supportive mechanism for career development.

The role of coaching and mentoring in developing staff at all levels is well established within the UK and internationally (Rhodes et al., 2004; Kennedy, 2005; Brundrett and Crawford, 2008; Bush, 2008; Rhodes, 2012b). Indeed as a tool for bringing about personal, professional, career wide and institutional based improvements or gains, there is a growing literature base that attests the importance of the framework of coaching and mentoring and its use. As Rhodes (2012b) defines:

‘Coaching is a learning relationship between individuals that has long been associated with raising individual performance. Mentoring is a learning relationship which includes coaching but also includes broader support; counselling, career development and access to wider learning opportunities.’ (Rhodes, 2012b, pp. 243).

Indeed mentoring, as a tool for professional development, is employed right at the start of a Newly Qualified Teacher’s induction period upon their appointment to their first school.

Currently, it is mandatory for an NQT to have a professional mentor, often a fellow colleague with more experience to support and guide the practice of these fledgling teachers as they begin their professional journey into teaching. For many new entrants to the teaching profession, this use of a professional mentor serves as a supportive vehicle for their acclimatisation and socialisation into their teaching career; a parallel may be drawn here to the Browne-Ferrigno (2003) model of leadership succession for head teachers or principals. It is these first professional interactions, kept throughout the NQTs first year of teaching, that will form the basis of the NQT’s understanding of the school’s contextual situation and provide essential guidance and support for the NQTs to develop their understanding and mastery of the way in which the school expects them to perform and, if implemented in the correct way, provide a strong guide to appropriate professional identity. In Panayiotou’s (2012) review, a detailed examination of the implementation of coaching and mentoring as a tool for professional development in the Scottish education system, at all levels, provides further evidence of the associated benefits of coaching and mentoring. However, Panayiotou points out that there is limited reference to empirical data that could further support the author’s claims of the effectiveness of this tool.

In the NCSL’s paper from 2005 entitled *Leading Coaching in Schools*, they set out a National Framework for Coaching and add:

‘Effective coaching is dependent on the learner’s willingness to be open and honest and to put their plans into action. The National Framework sets out the requirements for learners as well as coaches. Key responsibilities for learners include: understanding their own learning needs; reflecting on their own practice; taking an increasingly active role in their own learning; acting on what is learned to improve pupil learning.’ (NCSL, 2005: pp. 13)

As Goleman et al., (2002) define:

‘A good coach communicates a belief in people’s potentials and an expectation that they can do their best. The tacit message is, ‘I believe in you, I’m investing in you, and I expect your best efforts’. As a result, people sense that the leader cares, so they feel motivated to uphold their own high standards of performance, and they feel accountable for how well they do.’ (Goleman et al., 2002: pp. 62)

Clutterbuck (2003) defines and discusses the conditions for effective coaching and lists a number of factors that support the effective use and implementation of a coaching and mentoring system, among the most important being that there is good understanding about what effective coaches and learners do and that there are strong role models for good coaching practice. In addition to this, it should be understood that people welcome and actively seek feedback, even the most senior leaders. Personal growth, team development and organisational learning are integrated and the links clearly understood. This concept of learning centred organisations has emerged and as Rhodes and Brundrett (2009) have used the term ‘leadership for learning’ to describe the whole institution’s attitude to personal growth and professional growth of all stakeholders. They discuss the implications of the ‘leadership for learning concept’ and note that it is the leaders that are responsible for creating, fostering and nurturing a school culture that will foster learning and indeed holds this value as a core aim of the institution. Rhodes and Brundrett (2009) cite research that supports evidence of the benefits of coaching and mentoring in England but are quick to

note that the interest in coaching and mentoring has taken an international dimension too. The use of coaching and mentoring as a tool for leadership development has been widely acknowledged as a tool for staff within a business and educational setting as an effective mechanism to support, develop or bring about improvements. The use of coaching and mentoring is widespread in business and other industries however its use outside of the education field is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss here. It is noted however the mass of literature available from other fields and it may be that further research is needed to explore the parallels, differences and relative effectiveness of different models, with a view to learning from these different fields in future research. For these reasons, literature will focus mainly on the use of coaching and mentoring in educational establishments.

Coaching and mentoring is a growing area of research and application in educational settings, from the newly appointed NQT to the experienced head teacher on their second or later posts. The use of a mentor for NQTs has already been established, and it is worth considering the use of coaching and mentoring at other stages or transitions of leaders through to the newly incumbent head teacher. Right from the start of an NQTs career, these new entrants are charged with designing their own 'career entry profile', a summative view of their embryonic strengths and areas for development. This profile is identified through an amalgamation of their Teacher Training Institution's assessments, the NQTs self-perceptions and the perceptions of their performance upon appointment. This summative view leads to a career entry document that should, if completed and filled in accurately, pave the way for a dedicated programme of support and training experiences to secure the entrant's mastery of the initial standards for teachers. Assuming that the NQTs are able to demonstrate mastery of these skills, on successful completion of their NQT year their career profile is

revisited, and a focus then shifts to the NQT developing to a higher level, core proficiencies of teaching and learning and leading and managing. It is worth noting that leadership is not assumed to be something that post NQTs will automatically be drawn to and suitable for. There are a number of commercial leadership development programmes such as Leading from the Middle, Leadership Pathways and NPQH that support leadership capacity building alongside school based CPD and school to school networks. The role of coaching and mentoring forms a part of all of these leadership development programmes. Blackman (2010) in an Australian study suggests a link between coaching and a way to encourage recruitment and retention within the profession alongside leadership development. Rhodes and Fletcher (2013) report a number of studies (Veenman et al, 2001; Quinn et al, 2006; Margolis, 2005) where coaching is suggested to impact and support leadership development, persistence and self-efficacy in potential leaders. Self-efficacy is defined in Rhodes and Fletcher's (2013) paper:

'Self-efficacy refers to one's beliefs about accomplishing a task and can influence choice of activities, effort, persistence and achievement. People enter activities with varying levels of self-efficacy derived from prior experience, personal qualities and social support. As they work on tasks they acquire information about how well they are doing. This information influences their self-efficacy for continued learning and performance.' (Rhodes and Fletcher, 2013: pp. 4)

However, as Rhodes and Fletcher point out, information acquired requires validation by actual performance and that successful professional development programmes rest on observation as modelling for subsequent enactment as mentee or coachee. It is not just middle and senior leaders who may benefit from coaching and mentoring. Published research suggests that those aspiring to and making the transition to headship also benefit from a programme of coaching and mentoring. Scott (2010) In a Canadian study suggests

that there can be a reduction in the feelings of isolation, particularly in new Heads, if the quality of the coach or mentor is high and positive experiences are gained. Rhodes and Fletcher (2013) provide a useful synthesis of headship activities that are amenable to coaching and mentoring from an analysis of work by Tollhurst (2006). Whilst the authors acknowledge that context will play a significant part in defining the challenges and activities of each school and setting, they suggest a list of ventures that may be supported by coaching and mentoring that form a menu of daily headship activities.

- Performance management interviews.
- Cascading training.
- Implementing initiatives, i.e., curriculum.
- Moving teams forward.
- Forming new teams.
- Managing difficult parents.
- Behaviour management.
- Inducting new members of staff.
- Problem solving.
- Working with the school's council.
- Sharing knowledge and expertise.

Rhodes and Fletcher (2013) propose a three stage self-efficacy framework that is supported by effective coaching and mentoring that, the authors propose, may support aspiring, early career or later career head teachers to the goal of boosting their self-efficacy using an acronym of SEE, Self Efficacy Enquiry. This proposed model sits alongside already established papers on the use of coaching and mentoring to support leadership

development and the importance of learning from experienced heads. As the authors point out, coaching and mentoring whilst seemingly now integral to the teaching and leadership profession, do not in themselves offer a solution to all problems of career transition and leadership success but it does indeed offer great promise.

There is growing evidence of the importance and place of coaching and mentoring at all stages of leadership development but, coaching and mentoring is not without its problems.

In a US school-based study, Kilburg (2007) explored the use of mentoring teams and identified a range of problems that occurred during formal mentoring between more experienced staff mentors and new teachers. Kilburg identified a number of barriers that may affect the use and effectiveness of coaching and mentoring these potential problems include cost, mentor selection and training, time availability, poor interpersonal skills, understanding learner needs and the need for support from the principal. This study suggested that the emotional skills of the coach and coachee are important to the success of the programme. Bullough and Draper (2004) recognised the importance of sufficient training for the coach and coachee and from their paper they identify the potential need for emotional support for the participants to ensure success. As Rhodes (2012b) points out the complexity of potential emotional cost is further highlighted by consideration that these learning relationships may, for example, involve people of different ages, genders, values, seniority and those who may be prone to becoming too emotionally dependent upon their mentor. Rhodes (2012b) discusses Stead's work from (2006) where Stead reported the possibility for feelings of vulnerability on the part of mentees and issues of power and power differences. It may be argued that skill set aside, the matching and pairing of coach to coachee are as important, arguably more so than the base skill set of the coach so to ensure

that the purported two way and institutional growth are maximised and beneficial to all participants.

2.11 Summary of the literature review.

Many factors appear to affect and shape the lives and careers of senior leaders on their route to headship (Day & Bakioglu, 1996; Gronn, 1999; Ribbins, 2003; Earley & Weindling, 2007). Many of these experiences are not mutually exclusive and contribute to these leaders' journeys, sometimes in a positive way, sometimes not. Regardless of the route taken to headship, it is clear from the literature that these early experiences sometimes even pre teaching career experiences, shape and direct these leaders of the future (Pop & Turner, 2009; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Papanastasiou & Papanastasiou, 1998; Saban, 2003; Watt & Richardson, 2007). The models critiqued provide a theoretical framework that can be applied to the chosen method of semi-structured interview to explore the individual routes and then collectively the similarities and differences of the interviewees and their collective experiences of the path to headship. One strong theme of the literature reviewed suggests that the early career experiences and fledgling rehearsal of leadership and management skills are important. Through small-scale school improvement or project management, the rehearsal provides the necessary opportunity to learn, develop and apply some of the skills needed for headship on a mini-scale (Southworth, 2002; Wallace, 2003). After time, this allows the aspirant head teachers to feel ready to take the next step into the senior position of head teacher. This important step involves a transition toward and transformation into a senior leader (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Rhodes, 2012a; Rhodes, 2013). Before this step is taken, it is likely that through a

variety of roles within the school(s), responsibility for aspects of school improvement will have been delegated to these trainee head teachers to themselves distribute their received leadership duties and bring about change, successful or not. However, despite the range of pre headship experience and despite the once mandatory NPQH qualification, some new head teachers still describe an overwhelming feeling of the task ahead of them. Head teachers report feeling unprepared for their newly appointed role (Hobson et al., 2002; Bright and Ware, 2003; Weindling and Dimmock, 2006). It is with this background of career development, coaching, mentoring, leadership systems and mandatory qualifications that there still appears a gap in the preparation for headship, at least during those early years of the role and the important transition toward and transformation into a head teacher/principal. This research sets out to explore the lives and careers of early heads to answer the research questions of 'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?'

The predicted, and now very real, recruitment crisis for head teachers in schools is firmly affecting appointments to these senior posts. This research may provide a contribution to the research base for recruitment, retention, policy and practice on succession management, recruitment and retention of head teachers.

Chapter Three.

Research Design.

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I seek to evaluate and justify the research methodology underpinning this research on early headship. Firstly I will locate and place my research within a wider framework and clarify my philosophical approach to knowledge by discussing my personal ontological and epistemological stances. Next there will be a discussion of the research strategy chosen for this research including the methodology and method. Finally, there will be details of how this research has been managed with reference to access, ethics, validity and reliability.

3.2 Wider Frameworks

This research is placed within the humanistic knowledge domain where collecting and applying human experiences to develop practice is central to the research. Gunter and Ribbins' work from 2002 help to identify the wider framework and to position this research; in their work, the authors identified five knowledge domains those of 'conceptual research', 'humanistic research', 'critical research', 'evaluative research' and 'instrumental research'. Similarly, in their work from 2003, Wallace and Poulson refer to five different sorts of intellectual project, those of 'knowledge for understanding', 'knowledge for critical evaluation', 'Knowledge for action', 'instrumentalism' and 'reflexive action'. These works are situated within earlier and well-documented work of Habermas (1971) that provided a first typology of three kinds of research or cognitive interest, those of 'technical interest',

‘practical interest’ and ‘emancipatory interest’. These typologies are summarised in the table 4 below.

Table 4 – summary of wider frameworks.

Habermas 1971	Gunter and Ribbins (2002)	Wallace and Poulson (2003)
<i>Technical interest</i> – Knowledge sought is instrumental, concerned with the analysis of and solutions to problems.	<i>Conceptual</i> – Concerned with issues of ontology and epistemology, conceptual clarification.	<i>Knowledge for understanding</i> – attempts to develop and research knowledge in order to understand rather than improve practice.
<i>Practical interest</i> – knowledge sought is concerned with people and relationships, concerned with why we do what we do and how we relate to one another	<i>Critical</i> – concerned to reveal and emancipate leaders and followers from social injustice	<i>Knowledge for critical evaluation</i> – attempts to develop theoretical and research knowledge from an oppositional standpoint to argue why it should be rejected.
<i>Emancipatory interest</i> – knowledge sought is concerned with critical reflection followed by action to remedy injustice.	<i>Humanistic</i> – Gathers and theorises from the experiences and biographies of those who are leaders and managers.	<i>Knowledge for action</i> – attempts to develop practice knowledge and skills through training and consultancy to improve practice.
	<i>Evaluative</i> – seeks to abstract and measure impact and micro, macro and meso levels of social interaction.	<i>Instrumentalism</i> - attempts to impart practice knowledge and skills through training and consultancy to improve practice.
	<i>Instrumental</i> – seeks to provide effective strategies to deliver organisational goals.	<i>Reflexive Action</i> – attempts to develop and share practitioners’ own practice knowledge from a constructively self-critical standpoint to improve practice.
Adapted from – Habermas, (1971) <i>Towards a Rational Society: Student protest,</i>	Adapted from – Ribbins and Gunter, (2002) <i>Mapping Leadership studies in</i>	Adapted from – Wallace, and Poulson, (eds.) (2003) <i>Learning to read critically in</i>

science and politics.	Education. Towards a typology of knowledge domains.	educational Leadership and Management.
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This research adapts on the Humanistic approach, where in this case, the use of interview is the primary data source. Mason (2002) argues that it is people and their life stories that are the data sources within this (humanistic) approach. Plummer (2001) uses the phrase ‘critical humanism’, he explains:

It (critical humanism) must deal with concrete human experiences – talk, feelings, actions – through their social and economic organisation. (Plummer, 2001: pp.14)

Ribbins (2003) explains that humanistic research is concerned with gathering and theorising from the experiences of leaders through the use of life history, life story, autobiography and biography. As defined by Wallace and Poulson (2003), this research would be placed in both knowledge for understanding and knowledge for action as defined in table 4.

3.3 Philosophical approach

The ontological and epistemological assumptions of the researcher have profound implications for their research itself, the choice of the problem, and the formulation of research questions, methodological concerns, the kinds of data sought and the mode of treatment all will be influenced or determined by the viewpoint held. (Cohen, et al., 2007: p. 9). The researcher’s stance will influence the way in which the research is undertaken from the design to the conclusions.

Researchers’ ontological and epistemological positions can lead to different views of the same social phenomena (Grix, 2002). To approach a problem, researchers have to

choose between competing philosophies, theories and analytical traditions (Bates and Jenkins, 2007). Indeed as Pring (2006) argues, some poor research may be attributed to conceptual and philosophical positions that simply do not make sense. (Pring, 2006: pp. 5).

Pring goes further to suggest that:

‘First, therefore, philosophical examination of research questions, and of the enquires to which those questions lead, must start by trying to get clear the nature of that which is to be researched into.’ (Pring, 2006: pp. 6)

The term *ontology* concerns what is said to exist in some world, that which potentially can be talked about. Wand and Weber (1993) refer to ontology as:

‘A branch of philosophy concerned with articulating the nature and structure of the world.’ (Wand and Weber, 1993: pp. 220)

Cohen et al., (2007) provide a useful definition of ontology:

‘...assumptions which concern the very nature or essence of the social phenomena being investigated.’ (Cohen et al., 2007: pp.7)

Blaikie (2000) states that ontology is:

‘claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other. In short, ontological assumptions are concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality.’ (Blaikie, 2000: pp. 9)

It follows that ontology is a very personal set of beliefs, to an individual researcher, of the perceived reality of the social world is and how it is constructed. These beliefs will have been shaped and formed through the experiences, upbringing, social background, religion, current contextual situation, professional knowledge and career path of any individual. As many individual experiences can be different, so there are different ontological positions, different ways of seeing the world. Two widely held different views of the world are described by Cohen et al., (2007) as Positivist and Anti-Positivist. The Positivist view seeks to

apply a more pure scientific approach to research and data obtained. As Pring (2006) describes:

‘...it seeks the general laws or conditions which will enable teachers or policy makers to predict what will happen if...It seeks to establish empirically the most efficient ways of attaining certain goals.’ (Pring, 2006: pp. 31)

As Cohen et al., (2007) explain it is these positivists that seek to represent findings in terms of general laws or rules that can be applied to other generic or parallel situations. Critics of this view argue that such laws, rules and generalisations do not easily apply to the context of schools, school behaviours and situations where human interaction can so affect the outcomes be that in terms of outcomes of results at the end of a year or key stage, teaching impact or behaviours. As Cohen et al., (2007) state:

‘The difficulty in which positivism finds itself is that it regards human behaviour as passive, essentially determined and controlled, thereby ignoring intention, individualism and freedom.’ (Cohen et al., 2007: pp. 18)

Anti-positivist approaches include naturalistic, qualitative, interpretive approaches and it is within this paradigm that advocates argue that people and their behavioural choices are deliberate, creative and a constantly changing dynamic affected by the context the individuals are in with multiple interpretations of and perspectives on single events and situations (Pring, 2006; Cohen et al., 2007). Anti-positivists believe that many events are impossible to simplify and that situations needs to be examined through the eyes of the participants rather than the researcher. Those who advocate the anti-positivist movement are themselves not without critics and as stated in Cohen et al., (2007) attributing too much or too little to observed behaviours without understanding power relationships or by poorly conducted interviews can only lead to incomplete and or misleading reports and research.

My ontological assumptions of the research question stem from personal experience in my own local authority and through networks spanning Birmingham and the Black Country Local Education Authorities.

It is these experiences that form the basis of this research and sets out to explore the preparation for headship as experienced by those in their early years of headship. As a result of this, my ontological beliefs are those of anti-positivist/interpretivist and fits with the humanistic approach, looking at the lives, careers and experiences of people and their journey to headship. This is diametrically opposed to my first degree, pure science, but is beyond the scope of this research to discuss here. Although the conflict remains between my first degree and principals and the methods required now, I now have a clear understanding that I am firmly positioned within the anti-positivist/interpretist ontology and that my chosen research method of semi-structured interviews will, through careful planning and administration, stand up as reliable research.

3.4 Epistemology – How we might study something

The term *epistemology* denotes:

‘the nature of human knowledge and understanding that can possibly be acquired through different types of inquiry and alternative methods of investigation.’
(<http://www.idi.ntnu.no/grupper/su/publ/html/totland/ch032.htm>)

Guba and Lincoln (1994: pp.108) categorise alternative inquiry paradigms according to their stance on the following three questions:

The ontological question - what is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?

The epistemological question - what is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?

The methodological question - how can the inquirer go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?

In a similar way to the ontological position, epistemological position can have differing views on data collection to gain the knowledge on the perceived reality through quantitative or qualitative methods. Lichtman (2006) points out that a quantitative paradigm looks for a single objective reality testing hypothesis, looking for causes and effects and making predictions, while within qualitative paradigm there are multiple realities constructed by social interactions that the researcher tries to understand and interpret. Quantitative has been associated with positivism which holds that the scientific method can be applied to human experiences (Philips, 1983), whereas qualitative can be described as naturalistic, inductive, and relativist (Moss, 1990). Within the quantitative paradigm, the ontological assumption is that there is a reality that can be apprehended, and its epistemological assumption is that the researcher and the object of research are independent from each other; thus the object can be researched without have any influence by the researcher. On the other hand, within a qualitative paradigm, the ontological assumption is that realities are constructed by social actors, and its epistemological assumption is that the researcher

interacts with the object of research; consequently research findings are created through interaction between the researcher and the researched. (Pring, 2006; Cohen et al., 2007)

3.5 Methodological approach and strategy. Methodology – why a social survey?

As Denscombe (2007) states, a survey has become one of the most popular and commonplace approaches to social research. Denscombe (2007) argues that surveys should be wide and inclusive, offering a breadth of view, at a specific point in time.

As Check and Shutt (2012) discuss:

‘Survey research owes its continuing popularity to its versatility, efficiency, and generalisability. First and foremost is the versatility of survey methods.’ (Check and Shutt, 2012: pp. 160.).

A survey approach is well suited to theory testing or theory building (De Vaus, 2001) and as De Vaus (2001) argues although surveys are generally associated with quantitative data, they do lend themselves to qualitative data also. The use of a survey is further supported by Denscombe (2007) who states:

‘There is nothing which inherently excludes the use of surveys with qualitative research...’ (Denscombe, 2007: pp. 31).

A survey methodology using semi-structured interview as the tool is suited to this research question. This research is concerned with leadership development and the transition to and transformation into senior leaders. The work of, among others, Day & Bakioglu (1996) Gronn (1999), Ribbins (2003), Browne-Ferrigno (2003) and Earley & Weindling (2007) should be used to inform the theoretical models used to inform the data collection. As Cohen et al., (2010) define:

‘Surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions’ (Cohen et al., 2010: pp. 169).

Furthermore, surveys can be useful in determining the characteristics of a population or community, documenting community opinion or comparing groups of communities. In this case, the survey methodology can be used to determine and compare the route taken to headship of this identified sample of head teachers. This research shares characteristics of a cross-sectional survey, where in this case information is collected from a sample of head teachers within years one to five of their headship careers examining their route to headship.

Proponents of surveys argue that the advantages include relatively low costs to generate research data that can also lend itself well to small-scale research. Critics of this approach argue that the disadvantages of surveys include criticisms of the detail and depth of data obtained along with accuracy and honesty of respondents. For a survey, as with other tools, steps can be taken to increase validity, quality, credibility and trustworthiness of research. As Bassey (1999) argues, there is a need to consider ‘trustworthiness’ as a concept and advocates the need for the data collected to have prolonged engagement, persistent observation (of issues) and adequate data checking with the source(s) of the data.

The survey methodology is an appropriate design to invoke for this research due to the low cost and the need to capture a snapshot of respondents at a point in time as defined in the sample selection. Semi-structured interviews are also well suited to capturing the lives and careers biography of incumbent leaders and the tool itself is appropriate for use within the survey methodology. Critical analysis of the data collected will be expanded upon in section 3.1.1.

The use of a semi-structured interview to yield qualitative data, in this case on the lives and careers of head teachers could be argued as a phenomenological approach. As Denscombe (2007) argues phenomenology is sometimes presented as an alternative to positivism and can be seen as an approach that emphasizes subjectivity, description and interpretation rather than objectivity, analysis and measurement. As Denscombe also states:

‘Its (phenomenology) credentials as an alternative to positivism are further reinforced by the fact that phenomenological research generally deals with people’s perceptions or meanings; attitudes and belief; feelings and emotions.’ (Denscombe, 2007: pp. 75).

If Phenomenology is concerned with a description of how things are experienced first hand by those involved then this approach, within the humanistic tradition, supports the qualitative data gathered by semi-structured interview. A Phenomenological approach is not without critics and the advantages and disadvantages of this approach are summarised below in table 5, overleaf.

Table 5: Advantages and disadvantages of a phenomenology (Adapted from Denscombe, 2007, pp. 85-86)

Advantages of phenomenology	Disadvantages of phenomenology
<i>Offers the prospect of authentic accounts of complex phenomena.</i> Allows the researcher to delve into phenomena that are detailed enough to reflect the complexity of the social world	<i>Lacks scientific rigour.</i> Emphasis on subjectivity and description/interpretation contrasts with the scientific emphasis on objectivity. Can be used as a weakness for those who do not share the phenomenological stance.
<i>A humanistic style of research.</i> Carries an aura of humanism and bases the enquiry on the lived experiences of people in the everyday world and represents a research far removed from high minded abstract thinking.	<i>Associated with description and no analysis.</i> Those who are not sympathetic to phenomenology might criticise it for its primary focus on description.
<i>Suited to small-scale research.</i> Generally relies on in-depth interviews and lends itself to small-scale research where the budget is low and the main resource is the researcher her/himself.	<i>Generalisations from phenomenological studies.</i> As phenomenological research is often small scale, some would argue that representativeness and generalisability of findings may not apply more widely than to the study itself.
<i>The description of experiences can tell an interesting story.</i> It deals with everyday life and people can generally relate to this.	<i>Attention to the mundane features of life.</i> Phenomenology is concerned with the aspects of everyday life and some would argue that research done in this way might be unimportant compared with the big issues of social policy, international relations and economic progress.
	<i>Feasibility of suspending common sense.</i> Some argue it is impossible to suspend presuppositions and as such this can affect the validity of the research.

Whilst the thick, attention to detail, qualitative data gathered through interview allows for some generalisations to be made, this data is still open to doubt than through well

conducted quantitative research. Other dangers exist within the use of this data and as Denscombe (2003) states, de-contextualising the meaning or oversimplification of the points made in an interview, 'interviewer effect' along with an extended time for analysis means that the use of qualitative data is not without critics. However, the semi-structured interview, through careful management can still be an effective tool for data gathering through the depth of information facilitated by the opportunity to expand ideas of what the interviewees consider as crucial factors.

Each interview is scheduled to take typically over one hour, dependent upon the individual responses received.

3.6 Research methods

This research will involve the use of a semi-structured interview in a social survey of twenty Primary head teachers, in the West Midlands of England. Careful thought on the methods available led to the decision that this research is based in the Humanistic/interpretive approach, where in this case, the use of interview is the primary data source. Mason (2002) argues that it is people and their life stories that are the data sources within this (humanistic) approach. Plummer (2001) uses the phrase 'critical humanism', he explains:

'It (critical humanism) must deal with concrete human experiences – talk, feelings, and actions – through their social and economic organisation.' (Plummer, 2001: pp.14)

Ribbins (2003) explains that humanistic research is concerned with gathering and theorising from the experiences of leaders through the use of life history, life story, autobiography and biography.

The method will involve the use of a semi-structured interview as a tool for collecting data. Denscombe (2007) argues that interviews lend themselves well to the collection of data based on opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences. Structured interviews provide a rigid framework that is used and offers a limited range of responses whereas a semi-structured interview has more flexibility in the direction the interview takes. Denscombe (2007) states:

‘With semi-structured interviews, the interviewer still has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered. However, with the semi-structured interview the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order the topics are considered, and, perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on issues raised by the researcher.’ (Denscombe, 2007: pp. 176)

Whilst Pring (2006) argues that the use of this method, semi-structured interviews, allows the ‘objects’ of research to speak themselves and as such shed light on the significance of the meaning behind the actions and behaviours. However, critics argue that the sample sizes are often (too) small to use to serve policy and practice. Furthermore, opponents to this method would argue that the uniqueness of an individual’s view of the world and their own personal construct and context, affected by the views of the interviewer and their personal ontology serve to only reduce the validity of the research. Nevertheless, as Gronn and Ribbins (1996) state:

‘An appropriately framed study entails naturalistic investigation (relying principally on observational, documentary, and interview data) of samples of colleagues, peers and significant others. These are then related to wider political and policy environments which define the organisational contexts for leading, in order to explain the similarities and differences observed in the sample.’ (Gronn and Ribbins, 1996: pp. 458)

3.7 Research Management - Role of the Researcher.

The social status of the interviewer and interviewees are the same, the interviewer and interviewees are serving head teachers of primary schools within Birmingham and the Black Country. Advantages of this include a shared understanding of the social context in which the interviewees and interviewer work. The disadvantage is that as the schools are in a close conurbation and as such with shared School Improvement Partners, Local Authority inter-agency workers and external consultants may impact upon the honesty of information shared during the semi-structured interview. Whilst the sex, age and ethnic origins, qualifications of all the respondents may be different, it is beyond the scope of this research to differentiate between these aspects and for the purpose of this research, the interviewer and interviewees are merely 'head teachers'. All ethical principles as described in BERA (2011) were adhered to, with a close working nature of some of the schools and interviewees, an emphasis on the confidential nature of this research and guaranteed anonymity can only support the most honest and open of responses. Other dangers exist within the use of this data and as Denscombe (2007) states, de-contextualising the meaning or oversimplification of the points made in an interview, 'interviewer effect' along with an extended time for analysis means that the use of qualitative data is not without critics. However, the semi-structured interview, through careful management can still be an effective tool for data gathering through the depth of information facilitated by the opportunity to expand ideas of what the interviewees consider as crucial factors.

3.8 Validity

Yin (2003) defines four key tests of, how he describes, logical statements that can be applied to wider social research that support the use of a survey or another design. These tests are defined as:

Construct validity: establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied.

Internal validity (for explanatory or causal studies only, and not for descriptive or explanatory studies): establishing a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships.

External validity: establishing the domain to which a study's findings can be generalised.

Reliability: Demonstrating the operations of a study – such as the data collection procedures – can be repeated, with the same results.

(Yin, 2003: pp.34)

Cohen et al., (2010) discuss the terms internal and external validity. Internal validity is supported by the checks in place as discussed in this section, however, it is worth adding that in the case of this method, descriptive validity and interpretive validity (Cohen et al., 2010) are important to this research too. Descriptive validity is concerned with the factual accuracy of the account; interpretive validity is concerned with the ability to catch the meaning, interpretations, terms and events. External validity, as defined in Cohen et al., (2010: pp. 136), refers to the degree in which results can be generalised to the wider population, cases or situations. As Cohen et al., (2010) points out, there are different viewpoints on whether research is generalizable. It is worth noting that within this research, although limited in scope and sample size, as Cohen et al., (2010: p 136) state:

‘...it is possible to assess the typicality of a situation – the participants and settings, to identify possible comparison groups, and to indicate how data might translate into different settings and cultures.’ (Cohen et al., 2010: pp. 137)

Reliability of surveys, in this case using interview data, can be strengthened through careful planning and piloting. Yin (2003) points out the criticisms of this design in terms of reliability and argues that strong case notes to document work support reliability by supporting others

to repeat the work. Strong case notes would add some validity to the use of a semi-structured interview, supported by Silverman (1993) who argues that more open-ended interviews enable respondents to demonstrate their unique way of looking at the world. To support this research, the interview was piloted at two settings meeting the selection criteria.

As Denscombe (2007) points out, validity for the researcher who uses interview data can be problematic. Where the interview data yields facts, these can be checked, and cross referenced against other sources, however, where the interview data is concerned with feelings and experiences it is more difficult to make checks. However, as Denscombe (2007) argues, there are still some practical checks that can be made to gauge the credibility of what has been disclosed. Checking the transcript with the informant; checking the plausibility of the data and looking for themes within the cross section of interviews all adds to the credibility of data. (Denscombe, 2007: pp. 201-202)

3.9 Sample.

Non-probability sampling was used for this survey. The feasibility to contact a larger number of samples for this research was not practicable and as a result of this, purposive sampling methods were used. Twenty head teachers were chosen to apply the models discussed in the literature review to the data collected through interview. Ten of these head teachers were from One-form entry Primary Schools, those schools with a pupil allocation number of 210 (30 children per year group, per year of entry). Ten of these head teachers were from Two-form entry Primary Schools, those with a pupil allocation number of 420 (60 children per year group, per year of entry). These groups were then subdivided by the number of children with free school meals (FSM); this provided a broad spread of school size and socio-

economic factors. All of the schools could be classified as 'urban' schools and it is worth noting that the context of the school in which each respondent found themselves in, on appointment to their headship, may well affect the respondents' views. However, I would argue that context aside, there will be many similar issues surrounding the preparation for and transition to headship that would support the merit of this study in other urban and non-urban schools. Access issues were mitigated through the network of schools through the Black Country Local Education Authorities and my own work as a Local Leader of Education. However, once sufficient respondents had taken part; eight respondents were from schools with an FSM percentage of 30 or less; twelve had an FSM percentage of 31-50.

3.10 Interview questions.

The interview questions were based upon issues identified through the literature review and centred on themes of:

- Their journey to teaching as a career.
- Early career support and influential leaders/managers.
- Their journey to the point of application for headship.
- Perceptions of their preparation for headship.
- Perceptions of their transition to headship.
- Challenges of early headship.

- Successes of early headship.
- Reflections on their perceptions of their preparedness for headship.

A copy of the full interview schedule can be found in Appendix 3.

The interviews were conducted on a one to one basis at the interviewee's place of work. Using respondents' place of work provided a safe environment for the interview to take place where disclosure of potentially sensitive and personal information could be shared. All interviews were recorded electronically, and the files transferred to an encrypted storage device. Field notes were used, and as Denscombe (2007) points out, this is to support memory of the interviewer that can be prone to partial recall, bias and error. An interview prompt sheet (see below; table 6 overleaf) of interview good practice, adapted from Denscombe (2007) was taken into the interviews to provide a quick guide to help ensure reliability of the interview process along with good practice guidelines.

Table 6: Interview prompt sheet. Adapted from Denscombe (2007).

Interview prompt sheet	
Introduction and formalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Say 'hello' ○ Explain background to the research ○ Confirm permission ○ Confirm confidentiality ○ Is seating conducive to interview ○ Check the recording equipment is working
Starting the interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opening 'easy question'
Monitoring progress through main interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remain silent (prompt) ○ Repeat the question (prompt) ○ Repeat the last few words (prompt) ○ Offer some examples (prompt) ○ Ask for an example (probe) ○ Ask for clarification (probe) ○ Ask for more details (probe) ○ Summarise thoughts (check)
Finish the interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any other points to raise? ○ Thank for time.

3.11 Analysing interview data

The transcript was checked by the interviewee, within one month of the interview, for accuracy. No interviews were returned or commented on for inaccuracy or mis-

representation. By agreeing to take part in an interview, there is consent to take part, and this was further supported by a signed research interview consent form.

The data was analysed by thematic analysis following a full typed transcript of each interview. Following the interviews, each recording was transcribed line by line and assigned a line number. A hard copy of these transcriptions allowed for emergent themes to be identified and grouped by association. A matrix was constructed to allow for physical 'cutting and sticking' of the emergent themes. Each interviewee was assigned a colour and font type to allow for tracking of the themes. Cohen et al., (2007) suggest four basic stages of data analysis of interview transcripts namely, generating natural units of meaning; classifying, categorising and ordering; structuring narratives to describe the interview contents and finally interpreting the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) have a comparatively complex analysis consisting of some twelve stages; this is supported by Brenner et al., (1978) and the thirteen factors suggested for successful data analysis and Hycner's (1985) fifteen guidelines. As already argued, this research sits firmly in the humanistic, anti-positivist/interpretivist view and as such a phenomenological approach to data analysis would support the methodology and as such, Hycner's (1985) procedures provide a structure for the coding and analysis of the transcripts. Following transcription completion, data was colour coded and assigned a specific font to support identification of the source. Highlighting of emergent themes along with a physical cut and paste of the text allowed for emergent themes to be grouped together. The process of analysis was completed along with the audio tracks playing to ensure that the sense of the interview as a whole was not lost. This process was repeated for all transcripts. The key themes were summarised and reported back to the interviewees to support with the validity of the research. Reporting

back provided a first-hand validation procedure as to the analysis for meaning of the interviewer by the interviewee to support in reducing the chance of misrepresentation; this adds to the 'trustworthiness' (Bassey, 1999) of the research. None of the respondents requested any changes to the returned transcripts.

The analysis part is perhaps the most contested part of a qualitative method and as Miles (1979) questions:

'The most serious and central difficulty in the use of qualitative data is that methods of analysis are not well formulated. For quantitative data, there are clear conventions the researcher can use. But the analyst faced with a bank of qualitative data has very few guidelines for protection against self-delusion, let alone the presentation of unreliable or invalid conclusion to scientific or policy-making audiences. How can we be sure that an "earthy," "undeniable," "serendipitous" finding is not, in fact, wrong?' (Miles, 1979: pp. 591)

Furthermore as Miles and Huberman (1994) argue whether the answers of the respondents represent the reality or is the reality produced through the interaction between respondent and interviewer.

As Blaxter et al., (2001) argue it is worth doing interviews because interviews give the opportunity to uncover information not easily accessible through other methods such as questionnaire and observation. Additionally it may be possible for the interviewer to rephrase or simplify questions that may not have been understood by the interviewee.

However, as Hammersley and Gomm (2008) argue :

'what people say in an interview will indeed be shaped, to some degree, by the questions they are asked; the conventions about what can be spoken about; ...by what time they think the interviewer wants; by what they believe he/she would approve or disapprove of.' (Hammersley and Gomm, 2008: pp. 90)

To support the validity and reliability of any findings, as Cohen et al., (2010) argue there is a strong need for this type of data collection to minimise the possibility of bias and support increased validity and reliability. Cohen et al., (2010) identify a number of factors that may impact upon the validity and reliability of the findings from an interview. These factors include, notably, the tendency for the interviewer to see the interviewee on his/her own merits; a tendency for interviewers to seek an answer to support their pre-conceived notions; misperceptions of what the interviewee is saying; misunderstanding on the part of the interviewee of what is being asked.

It is important to highlight the control measures in place within this research to minimise the effects of these potential areas for bias are important to support the validity and reliability of any findings. As previously discussed within this chapter, care was taken to avoid asking leading questions and strict adherence to the interview good practice (Denscombe, 2007) was followed in conducting all interviews. Additionally, the interviews were piloted at two settings in order to inform the data collection process. In order to further support reliability and validity of findings, the process for data analysis supported critical reflection on the data obtained.

Firstly, the ethical procedures in place provide a necessary and relevant level of support in encouraging the honesty and openness of respondents. The internal control procedures of the University of Birmingham's ethics committee help to mitigate the potential for respondents to 'hold back' by ensuring that anonymity is guaranteed in agreeing to participate in this research. Interviewees are all aware of this condition as part of the

‘informed consent’ process.

Secondly, the notion of whether the interviewee is ‘telling the truth’ or ‘telling what the interviewer wants to hear’ is hard to establish with full certainty. As previously argued, the ethical considerations help to mitigate part of this area of potential loss of reliability.

Further supporting this reduction in reliability is the, again previously argued, ‘interview good practice’. Here, as part of the interview process, the ability of the interviewer to re-phrase, para-phrase and probe to illicit further and deeper understanding is important in gaining the correct meaning, interpretation and checking of the understanding of answers. In doing so, this provides a second chance for the interviewee to re-state their view to clarify and confirm.

Furthermore, arguably the most important element in securing the reliability of the data from the respondents is the analysis itself. As Miles and Huberman (1994) argue, data analysis is a continuous process because for each interview that is conducted, more knowledge is possessed. This provides not only more information about the phenomenon that is studied in itself but also about the interview guide as well. As more interviews are conducted, the researcher becomes more experienced. In conducting more interviews he or she will find several “buttons to push” in order to get to the information that is being searched for. Miles and Huberman (1994) argue three useful ways of analysing data:

1. Data reduction – this starts at the very initial research phase when concepts and methods are developed and subjects/ phenomenon are selected.
2. Data display – seeking meaning on a limited part of the data (summaries, diagrams and text-matrices)
3. Conclusion – comparing, contrasting, searching for patterns, triangulation, etc.

Additionally, supporting the phenomenological approach Kvale and Brinkman (2009) suggest five steps for analysing interview in this tradition:

1. Read through the whole interview to get a sense of the whole
2. The researcher determines the natural meaning units
3. The natural meaning unit is restated as simply as possible
4. Interrogating the meaning units in terms of the specific purpose of the study
5. Essential non-redundant themes of the entire interview are tied together into descriptive statement

The data in this research was analysed by assigning each head teacher interviewed a coloured highlighting pen, transcripts were analysed. Colour coded responses against each question asked were recorded on the transcripts. The most pertinent responses to each question were highlighted using the head teacher's assigned colour.

These colour-coded responses were then re-organised so that all of the head teachers' responses were grouped together. This process allowed for common themes to emerge and be identified. In doing so, this reduces the potential for bias and mis-representation and adds to validity and reliability. The themes emerging offer a composite summary of the views of twenty different sampled head teachers; whilst all views are important, for the purposes of this research I have made it clear how many of the head teachers shared the views expressed as emergent themes. The clarity of the language allows the researcher and others to assume professional judgement in attributing credibility to the findings and avoids the element of misrepresentation and in doing so supports the critical analysis of the data returned from the interviews. This process enabled me to identify the meaning of the

responses given and to critically separate out the context specific issues that were not generalisable. In doing so, common themes emerged that enabled me to group these together and reflect upon the literature base for further analysis. The language associated with the findings is discussed further within chapter four.

3.12 Ethics.

Ethical principles as described in Denscombe (2007) were upheld; those of participant protection, avoiding deception or mis-representation and informed consent. Interviewer effect (Denscombe, 2007) cannot totally be mitigated.

Blaxter et al., (2001, p. 158) states the importance of ethics, clarity and responsibility as a researcher and to that end, the interview was tested and before the final interview schedule was decided upon, refinements were made. All staff taking part were informed of the intended outcomes of the research and anonymity was guaranteed at all times.

BERA (2011) revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011) was upheld at all times. The main points from this guidance document, specific to this research, relate to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. However, as Pring (2006) argues, the general guidelines are often unclear when it comes to how to apply them to practice and goes further to suggest that virtuous researchers need to act appropriately in a particular situation.

Participants were read a short statement that summarised the ethical considerations discussed here along with a data protection statement. Part of this statement included specific reference to the digital recordings and transcripts so that participants were assured

that the data was stored on an encrypted device. For the purpose of this research, to ensure that ethical standards are maintained, there will be no reference to any individual and this research will ensure that no one suffers as a result of its submission.

3.13 Summary

This research design chapter has discussed and justified my philosophical approach in the context of wider frameworks available. The strategy, methods and methodological approach taken along with research management and analysis considerations have been discussed, and my reasons for semi-structured interviews and analysis methods made. One potential limitation of this research is in the lack of an additional method to triangulate results. However, as Brundrett and Rhodes (2014) argue, using a variety of respondents drawn from a single group (e.g. heads from different schools) may be seen as helpful in enhancing validity; this is in addition to Bassey (1999) who argues the use of the term 'trustworthiness' as discussed earlier within this chapter. The next chapter presents the findings of this research, systematically, according to each research question.

Chapter Four.

Findings.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to describe and synthesise the experiences of the 20 head teachers interviewed. Following the transcription of the 20 interviews, each transcript was sent to participants for the interviewees to check each transcript for factual accuracy.

Assigning each head teacher interviewed a coloured highlighting pen, transcripts were analysed. Colour coded responses against each question asked were recorded on the transcripts. The most pertinent responses to each question were highlighted using the head teacher's assigned colour.

These colour-coded responses were then re-organised so that all of the head teachers' responses were grouped together. Re-organising and grouping allowed all of the head teachers' responses for each question to be viewed together whilst still recognising the individual responses made. These collective responses were then analysed question-by-question, for common themes. This led to a group of common themes being identified. These common themes, identified from the responses to the interview questions, were then grouped under the broad research questions.

The themes emerging from the analysis and grouping of the responses from the transcripts were:

- The route into teaching.

- The catalyst/motivation for teaching and not another career.
- Early career support and the role of coaching and mentoring.
- Early talent spotting.
- NPQH perceived as a positive experience – networking, face-to-face sessions and the final assessment.
- NPQH perceived as a less positive experience.
- Affirmation of readiness – self-belief – aspiring head teachers felt ready to apply for headship positions after significant leadership experiences.
- Ready or not? – Perceptions of readiness for their early headship.
- Pre-headship apprenticeship – the relationship with their head teacher and the role of coaching and mentoring.
- Freedom to experiment and make mistakes.
- Coping with the responsibility.
- Understanding the contextual factors of the role appointed to.
- Lack of understanding/experience of the wider role of head teacher.

This chapter will present the findings, under the three broad headings of the research questions with a thematic analysis of the responses given.

To support an accurate representation of responses and to avoid ambiguity or misrepresentation, a definition of the language used to apportion ratios to responses is helpful and explained below, referencing table 7.

Table 7. Language associated with ratios of respondents.

Language used	Number of respondents
Very Few	1-3
Few	4-7
Some	8-10
Many	11-13
Most	14-17
Majority	18-20

It is worth noting that where the term ‘many’ is used within this chapter, a clear reference will be made to the specific number of responses that were made to ensure clarity and avoid misrepresentation.

4.2 Research question 1. ‘How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?’

This research question is not only important to explore and set into context the different paths and experiences that lead to headship, but also the range and diversity of the

contextual situations that individual leaders find themselves. The themes emerging under this research question were:

- The catalyst/motivation for teaching and not another career.
- Early career support and the role of coaching and mentoring.
- Early talent spotting.

4.3 Theme 1.1 – The route into teaching.

The majority (n=18) of head teachers interviewed took a similar route to gaining their teaching qualification; secondary school, A-Levels, Teaching or First degree followed by PGCE. Very few (n=2) interviewees had an alternative route into teaching and of these respondents; their career path came from personal change in circumstance and a totally opposite career change. As head teacher 13 stated:

‘I worked for Abbey National as an area financial services manager for 12 years, and then my marriage broke up and my children were five and six months.... I earned a lot of money but there was no fulfilment so I thought, now would be a good time to think about a career change...so I went to a career’s fair with no idea at all and then stopped at the teaching stand and thought, this could be for me’ (head teacher 13)

All of the head teachers interviewed served a varying proportion of time as a teacher before gaining further professional status as a subject leader, deputy head teacher or head teacher; this will be expanded upon further through the themes emerging in the research question 2.

4.4 Theme 1.2 The catalyst/motivation for teaching and not another career.

Most (n=15) respondents had always wanted to teach; the majority (n=19) did not aspire to headship at the start of their careers; few (n=3) were unsure of their career path after completing their first degree and as head teacher 3 put it:

‘ I did an English degree, didn’t know what to do with it. So like all my friends at the time, ended up working in a bookshop. Realised that wasn’t going to get me very far, I had a housemate who was a Primary Teacher so I ended up doing some voluntary work and ended up doing a PGCE. But it was mainly because I didn’t have any other option...so there were no years and years of wanting to go into teaching behind that.’
(head teacher 3)

One respondent reported that being a head teacher was her career aspiration, rather than teaching:

‘From day one at University I, and I don’t mean this to sound arrogant in any way, but I was different to the two of them (friends on a teaching degree). They were there to be a teacher and I was there to be a head teacher, even at that stage...they would laugh at me because I would think of things quite big picture. They would think things as ‘well why would you need to know that, if it’s just about your class?’ I used to say, well because one day it won’t be about my class, it will be about my school’
(head teacher 13)

However, this respondent is the exception and most (n=15) had always wanted to teach. Within this group of head teachers who had always wanted to teach, their catalyst to actually teach came from three distinct groups. The groups emerging were good personal experience of Primary or Secondary school (n=8), strong family influence (n=4) or ‘they just knew’ (n=3) suggesting that teaching for this small group was a vocation.

The most common catalyst within this subgroup of those who had always wanted to teach came from a good personal experience of primary or secondary school. These respondents reported that it was indeed their teachers and the passion, commitment, their love of the subject they were teaching and the inspiration the respondents received from this that was their catalyst to teach. If not this, then the pure enjoyment they had of their own Primary/Secondary schools were the reason for them wanting to teach. A representative example of the influence of the respondents' teachers and school experience is from head teacher 4 who recounted:

'He gave me a real love of the subjects I suppose; he really instilled that in me to the point where I did go onto apply to college. I felt great, I put that down to Mr B I think. So it's the teachers along the way isn't it? I'd always thought about teaching but when I went to do the nursery nurse thing, one particular tutor said 'have you thought about A-levels? Have you thought about university?' I'll be honest; nobody from my family had been to university. [Qu: If that conversation hadn't happened?] I probably wouldn't have done it. No I wouldn't. So I look back and think, 'Thank you Mr B.' (head teacher 4)

The final common catalyst to teach came from respondent's family influence, notably the desire of their parents, grandparents or another family member to support their children in taking on their drive to improve their perceived social status through higher education. As head teacher 17 commented:

'She (mother) always said 'You will never do what I've done. You will never work in poverty'. She was just determined that we would have what she perceived to be a better life. My Dad's very traditional, so he would want his dinner on the table and the house to be cleaned, and the children to be fed and all those sort of things. Then she didn't want that for me, I suppose I am everything that she wanted. I don't cook my husband's dinner either...' (head teacher 17)

4.5 Theme 1.3 Early career support and the role of coaching and mentoring.

Most (n=15) of the interviewees received little or no formal or structured early career support and development at all. It was clear from the respondents that their induction was ad hoc at best. Representative comments from head teachers regarding this support are illustrated by:

‘...we had very little support to be fair. You were given a mentor which was another member of staff, she was new to the school as well. So it was basically ‘ Here’s your classroom, get on with it. The only lesson observations I had would be from the school advisor, he would pop in. I think he saw me teach twice in one year.’ (head teacher 4)

Another commented:

‘None (no support). Fortunately another NQT started at the same time and we supported one another, but there was no external support in those days. To be honest, my first couple of years made me wonder what I’d done.’ (head teacher 6)

Whilst it is clear from the respondents that most (n=15) did not receive any formal structured, planned support. There was a shared common theme from all of the respondents of their perceptions of the supportive role that coaching and mentoring played in supporting them in developing their early ideas of teaching, learning and in some cases early leadership roles.

Despite most (n=15) reflecting that there was no formal induction, CPD or other structured planning to the induction received; all were allocated a mentor in one form or another. A similarly new colleague to the school, a parallel teacher or more senior member of staff may have assumed this role e.g. Deputy head teacher. Perceptions of the effectiveness of this support varied, but all recognised the important role that this relationship played in

developing and supporting the interviewed head teachers' early ideas of teaching and learning, at the start of their careers.

'We just worked as a team. We worked together. We were in parallel classrooms, we planned together and we had an adjoining room. We just opened the screens so we were almost like team teaching in that way' (head teacher 8)

A second respondent stated:

'...she coached and mentored me in teaching reception. As in how it should work, I had a fabulous nursery nurse as well. So I would talk through my ideas of what my topic in reception was and she would say 'Yes X, that is a really good idea, what about if you do this?' or she would do the coaching and mentoring thing, 'so are you going to do that, what are you going to do after it?'" (head teacher 11)

In addition to this coaching and mentoring, ad-hoc yet effective support, many (n=13) describe a culture and ethos within the wider school staff populous that also had a coaching and mentoring approach to supporting all staff.

'...It was through the ethos of the staff room, because we would all go in and talk about our teaching. I don't think we were as honest as saying, 'no that lesson was terrible, I shouldn't have done that.' But we just had that format there. I suppose we didn't think it was judgemental' (head teacher 11)

A second interviewee discussed:

'...that was just the ethos of the school; everybody worked together, everybody made themselves available. It was a very professionally nurturing environment, and everybody just did it automatically. If there was a problem, you went and found someone who could help you solve that problem. We supported each other. It was about staff utilising each other's skills in order to improve other people's teaching in aspects they didn't feel particularly confident in. Because that was the culture and climate of the place.' (head teacher 1)

4.6 Theme 1.4 Early talent spotting

Most (n=15) of the respondents were recognised by their head teacher or other senior leaders for their leadership potential within the first three years of their teaching careers.

This early talent spotting appears to take one of two forms, recognition of teaching excellence or recognition of leadership potential. Whether teaching excellence or leadership potential was the catalyst for this early talent identification, the net result appears to have been the same, regardless of school or context. head teachers, in a relatively short period of time (before the end of the third year of teaching), promoted or encouraged the respondents to apply for roles with greater leadership responsibility.

‘At the end of my first year, I had a meeting with the head about my future, because we had those every year and she told me I could be a head as quickly as she’d become a head. She was 36. [Qu: What do you think she spotted in you?] Well, I was a very good teacher and I was a very good teacher from the get go. I think some people are just born to teach.’ (head teacher 1)

Another head teacher recounted:

‘...after two or three years I just couldn’t work any harder. I started looking for a job with a management point and a job appeared on the board (staff room notice board) that only I could apply for. X recognised the talent, X’s really good at that. [Qu: so this job was to keep you?] Keep me, yes. Everybody knew it because all joked about the fact that we’d all got golden halos but they strangled us occasionally; X recognised the potential in all of us and we’re all head or Deputies that he spotted. [Qu: What did he spot in you?] Commitment. I don’t know. I think we’ve all got passion and had worked towards kids who need it’ (head teacher 2)

Similarly, head teacher 12 discussed:

‘I think the faith that she showed in me (appointed to Literacy co-ordinator in three years), not as a young person because I was old by then, but inexperienced, the faith that she put in me made me determined to do a good job. So I think she gave me the confidence to go and have a go.’ (head teacher 12).

head teacher 20 recalled:

‘ The head teacher approached me and asked me to sort the library out; this was a big thing for someone at the end of my first year teaching. I felt confident that he was there if I needed him. I felt confident that I could do what he wanted me to do, so in that sense he could have had his fingers really burnt. In all fairness I did spend more money than we had so in a sense he did. The way he asked me, the way he tasked me, the way he monitored me, and the way he dealt with the issue at the end. I suppose he could see some potential in me and he was willing to take a punt (on me).’ (head teacher 20)

4.7 Summary findings research question 1. ‘How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?’

The majority (n=18) of head teachers interviewed took a linear and typically progressive approach to teaching of Secondary School, Further Education and Higher Education followed by career entry. Whilst the majority (n=19) did not aspire to headship at the start of their careers, many (n=15) had always known they wanted to teach following good personal experiences at school or encouragement, inspiration or the desire to emulate teachers they had themselves experienced during their education. Most (n=15) did not receive any significant formal induction or support, this group’s experiences with fellow colleagues, a mentor or wider staff ethos and culture of the institution they found themselves in served to shape their early ideas of effective teaching, learning and early leadership through the coaching and mentoring they experienced. The effectiveness of this coaching and mentoring allowed many (n=15) to be ‘talent spotted’ by their head teachers as models of teaching good practice; this in turn led to the identification of potential talent for leadership and early career promotion. In all cases, this led to leadership roles within the first three years of their teaching careers, fledgling leaders having the opportunity to lead on some aspect of school provision.

4.8 Research question 2. 'On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?'

The second research question is important to explore the perceptions of head teachers on the quality of their preparation for headship. The themes emerging under this research question were:

- NPQH perceived as a positive experience – networking, face-to-face sessions and the final assessment.
- NPQH perceived as a less positive experience.
- Affirmation of readiness – self-belief – aspiring head teachers felt ready to apply for headship positions after significant leadership experiences.
- Ready or not? – Perceptions of readiness for their early headship.

This section will branch into themes relating to the respondents preparation for headship, the transition to readiness for application to headship and the aspects that respondents perceived as helping and hindering their succession to a headship. The second research question is also important to examine perceptions of how prepared the respondents felt during their early headship experiences. Although NPQH is no longer mandatory for first time head teachers, at the point of application and their succession to headship, NQPH was mandatory for this group. All of the respondents would have completed the NPQH programme as a pre-requisite to their application for headship.

4.9 Theme 2.1 NPQH perceived as a positive experience – Networking, face-to-face sessions and the final assessment.

Some respondents (n=11) reported a positive perception of NPQH; other respondents (n=9) reported less positive perceptions of NPQH and its role in the preparation for and transition to headship. It appears that the respondents are split into two distinct groups, those whose perceptions are more positive about NPQH and those whose perceptions are less positive about NPQH; all of the interviewees had a polarised opinion of NPQH.

For those respondents, where their perceptions are more positive of the role of NPQH, these interviewee's perceptions of the strengths of NPQH centred around two key areas; Networking via the Face-to-face sessions, Reflection time and 'affirmation of readiness' for headship. For the purpose of this findings chapter, I include in the 'face-to-face' section any aspect of the NPQH programme where course facilitators led or facilitated learning e.g. the actual face-to-face INSET days, school based projects or final assessment. These aspects are separate and distinct to the non face-to-face sessions of NPQH where, for example, respondents may have been completing on-line learning self-study. However, for clarity and to avoid ambiguity or misrepresentation, where comments are used it will be explicit which section of NPQH respondents were referring to. I will take each key point, in turn, illustrating the perceptions of the respondents.

Few interviewees (n=7) reported positively on their perceptions of the value of networking provided by the face-to-face sessions. Socialising with colleagues in a similar position of career progression, professional discussions around personal, professional circumstance and the time to explore other's successes and challenges were perceived positively.

‘Networking with other people in the same position...the networking with colleagues was great.’ (head teacher 3)

A variety of comments from respondents summarise the perceptions of the key benefits of the face-to-face sessions:

‘We had some good speakers who said it as it was and I think working with people, potential Heads, that was very good. That was very good and useful’ (head teacher 4)

‘The face-to-face days, at that point you had four face-to-face days and those were good in the sense of contact with people and learn about their establishments and that they’ve done and so on...I guess the contact with similarly minded people. It was just about being able to discuss different issues really, in quite challenging circumstances. That sort of, I suppose, taught you how to cope. That was useful, that contact with others.’ (head teacher 5)

‘The face-to-face sessions were useful in terms of spending time with colleagues who were at a similar career stage and discussing the different strategies used for different scenarios, that was useful.’ (head teacher 6)

‘It’s meeting other people that are in the same position as you, so you can talk through with them their ideas and what they’re thinking and everything else.’ (head teacher 7)

As detailed in the literature review, there have been a number of iterations of NPQH. Regardless of the content revision, each variation of NPQH has culminated in a ‘final assessment’, a pass or fail grading for the aspiring head teachers against the National Standards for head teachers. Some respondents (n=11) also commented on their perceptions of the usefulness of the final assessment.

One head teacher added more:

‘You manage some people and some of the management is actually just down to the title you hold. There are certain people who give in to what it is you’d like simply because you are the head or deputy. Sitting in a room with an awful lot of people that have got that same viewpoint and trying to persuade them and talk them

around and get them to see your point of view and whatever, that was really interesting.’ (head teacher 1)

Another commented:

‘They forced you to deal with difficult conversational role-plays back to back. That was really good’ (head teacher 2)

Others recounted:

‘...the feedback that I had from the NPQH people running it were ‘Yes, that is exactly what we are looking for. These are all of your strengths.’ To see someone actually point those out and talk to me about my strengths was the first time that had happened. You have all your strengths and then your developments.’ (head teacher 8)

‘I liked the final assessment day when you went through all those scenarios and the interview.’ (head teacher 9)

‘ The activity with the challenging member of staff, that was really good; you do it anyway as a leader. But knowing that someone is judging you on it. I think that is where I reflected on, you have to be calm, you have got to give opportunities for success, even though it is going to be really, really hard for that person. So I think that is what made me reflect there, which is helping me now.’ (head teacher 11)

4.10 Theme 2.2 NPQH perceived as a less positive experience.

Some respondents (n=9) reported NPQH as a far less positive experience. Where respondents felt that NPQH was a less positive experience than other interviewees, the criticism of the programme was evident from their response to a question about their perceptions of the role of NPQH in their preparation for headship. Illustrative responses demonstrate the depth of negative feelings about the programme:

‘I’m not convinced that I learnt a great deal from it really. The school-based assessment took a ridiculous amount of time because it was sorting all the different bits of evidence you had to prepare. I don’t know what it showed about my leadership skills apart from I can organise lots of bits of paper, do you know what I mean?’ (head teacher 5)

Another commented:

‘The quality of the provider I am sad to say, it was a bit patchy at times. As an NCSL proven program, they base everything on a formula and on a script. You would get some providers that would stick to a script and sometimes you have to go with your audience and you have to respond to the needs of the group. You would think to yourself, this is just such a waste of a day. I am not sure there is any one program that could really in totality prepare you for the role of head.’ (head teacher 18)

Few respondents (n=4) perceived the assessment elements of NPQH as poor, adding that the workload and artificial nature of the tasks set bore little resemblance to the actuality of the role of head teacher. Additionally these respondents perceived that the assessment did not serve as a valid indicator of the potential effectiveness of the candidates for the role of head teacher.

‘The two day assessment, really wasn’t...[pause] that didn’t really glean whether a person would make a good head or not, I didn’t particularly think. There were plenty of people who passed the two-day assessment but had no intention of ever becoming a head. So why go through it in the first place? But it didn’t equally determine whether you’d be a good head or not. At the end of it, by passing it, it doesn’t mean you would be a good head or by failing it doesn’t mean that you won’t be a good head. It’s a qualification that at the time you needed but it isn’t indicative of as you would be professionally.’ (head teacher 17)

head teacher 18 supported this view:

‘I think, with hindsight, (the downside) were the exercises that bore no reality to what happens when you really are a head.’ (head teacher 18)

head teacher 14 discussed:

‘Sometimes I think they (course facilitators or assessors) are looking for you to say a certain thing for your answer. It’s almost like they don’t actually want to listen to what you have got to say, I don’t feel that there is much flexibility really. I went on the community cohesion day, the lecturer or person more or less admitted in the end he did the same thing with every group that he got.’ (head teacher 14)

4.11 Theme 2.3 Affirmation of readiness – Self-belief - aspiring head teachers felt prepared to apply for headship positions after significant leadership experiences.

All of the respondents recounted feeling ready to apply for headship after significant and very different leadership experiences. For most (n=14), this readiness to apply came about as a result of the direct leadership experiences gained as deputy head teachers. Of this group (n=14), all described the supportive network of staff around them but all spoke particularly of the support given by their own head teacher.

As head teacher 1 described:

‘Well, my head was always there for me. If I needed to make a decision irrelevant of whether she would have done it that way. She was always at the end of a telephone. Basically she trusted me to run that place while she wasn’t there.’ (head teacher 1).

head teacher 7 discussed:

‘My previous head teacher was very good, very much into delegation of appropriate responsibilities. So my deputy headship was a training ground for becoming a head.’ (head teacher 7)

As head teacher 17 talked about:

‘She (head) was probably the best person ever at truly handing things over to me. She wasn’t precious about anything to do with her school, if you like. She would just leave it open...’assessment, do what you want, sort it out, not bothered. Curriculum, do what you want.’ I would go back with all these plans and ideas and she would say ‘yes if that’s what you want, if that’s what our kids need’’ (head teacher 17)

Important to this group was some kind of recognition, seed of belief planted by others, or self-recognition that they were actually doing the job of head teacher, in all but title. Very few (n=2) experienced a route to headship from positions within their Local Authority and as

such, their leadership experiences were different from the school-based aspirant head teachers but nevertheless they too described a range of leadership experiences that supported them in feeling ready to apply. Very few (n=2) describe the experience of being a senior leader within a school placed in Special Measures as the reason why they felt prepared to apply for a headship. Special Measures is a category attributed to schools following an unsuccessful inspection by OFSTED; Special Measures is attributed to schools who are deemed to be providing an inadequate standard of education and as such are placed into 'Special Measures'.

As head teacher 4 explained about the 'Special Measures' experience:

'Certainly with the monitoring (of Special Measures). It's the rigour isn't it? You need to know exactly what it is you're focussed on and not be afraid to say, 'Yes this is great, but this is awful, what are we going to do about it?' One of the inspectors intimated that we were going in (into Special Measures) and we (respondent and colleague) felt that it was the end of our careers. The inspector turned around and said 'No, not at all. Be like the phoenix and rise from the ashes.' That's been my mantra ever since. Yes, be the phoenix. She planted that seed of belief.' (head teacher 4)

Very few (n=2) worked within a LA structure before being appointed to headship; despite the limits on certain leadership experiences, as a result of their pre-headship experience being non school based, these respondents still reported having significant leadership experience. As head teacher 10 described:

'So yes, working with good Heads, but it was very specific. So I wouldn't necessarily see the whole range of what the head's job was so I'd be coming at it with a teaching and learning hat on. I was just banging my head at the wall with schools I was going in, working my arse off and nothing happening as a result of it. You know, you're spending hours with teachers, working with leadership, working with Heads and

going back two or three weeks later and nothing's shifting. Just thinking, what's the point of this?' (head teacher 10)

Most (n=14) reported the need to have their potential skills of headship recognised, affirming that these aspiring Heads were actually fulfilling, from their perception at that time, most of the role of head teachers. This affirmation came in a variety of ways, for a few (n=4) the affirmation came from a direct approach from their head teacher or other LA based senior leader.

As head teacher 12 recalled:

'I think for me it was (the head) having faith. I just thought, 'she's made that commitment to me. I wasn't going to let her down come what may. So I think it was her belief in me – yes you can do it. It was sort of, as I did each phase that gave me confidence to step for the next one.' (head teacher 12)

As head teacher 2 discussed:

'The head of the LA came down, he doesn't just turn up does he? He said, ' Well what you are doing is brilliant but one of you has got to go. (conversation to HT and DHT) So your succession planning's sorted. That was the final okay. Okay if X LA has faith in me then let's go with them (for headships), let's see what's out there.' (head teacher 2)

For a few (n=4) the affirmation came from other colleagues, through feedback on their performance within schools, settings or leadership development programmes.

head teacher 11 recalled:

'Unfortunately from the consultant head teacher I learnt an awful lot about how not to be a head teacher. But it also, I did a lot of the head's job, which I didn't realise until I reflected afterwards, and I had people telling me 'But you are doing that'.' (head teacher 11)

head teacher 6 shared:

‘I’d been a deputy for a while when I did it (NPQH), they said they felt I was ready for headship. So the feedback I got from that was very much the skill set that I’d developed...[Qu: Did that help you feel ready to apply then, using that feedback?] Yes, it did actually. It helped with confidence.’ (head teacher 6)

For a few (n=4) there was a self -realisation of the range of roles, responsibilities and leadership skills they were demonstrating that could be compared to the head teachers in their settings.

As head teacher 13 discussed:

‘Something actually stands out; there were some good quality courses and conferences that I was going on. Well at that time it felt like the things we were hearing speakers talk about, I felt that I could hold my own. I felt like I could sit there and people were talking and I started to formulate ideas and I was having an opinion for myself and forming ideas and opinions based on what I really believed in about education and schools. I felt that I was ready to do something myself because I felt like I wasn’t following people anymore.’ (head teacher 13)

head teacher 9 drew an analogy:

‘She (head) believed in distributed leadership. She allowed me to use my skills. I wrote something called My Pie Report. I had my finger in so many pies around school, having that experience of leadership across the school opened up possibilities.) head teacher 9.

head teacher 5 realised:

‘So I was building up my experience there I being in charge and making the decisions part. Then the next head came and she had a lot of time off. I think it was just the fact that I thought, actually I’m in here quite a lot. I’m doing quite a lot of the things that I think I need to do as a head. The head’s off and off so I’m coping with the day-to-day stuff as well. I thought, yes, I’ll put in an application.’ (head teacher 5)

Similarly head teacher 1 described:

‘Because the head was out so frequently and I got to make a lot of decisions and do a lot of the everyday running of the school, you start thinking, well actually I can do this.’ (head teacher 1)

4.12 Theme 2.4 Ready or not? – Perceptions of readiness for their early headship experiences.

Despite the considerable leadership experience of the respondents the range of responses around perceptions of readiness for headship, after reflecting upon the challenges of early headship, range from unprepared to very prepared. Similarly to the polarised opinions of NPQH, respondents fit broadly into two groups of responses, those who felt unprepared for the challenges of their headship and those who felt prepared. Many (n=11) felt unprepared for the challenges of early headship; few (n=4) felt relatively prepared; very few (n=3) felt well prepared.

As head teacher 17 described:

‘I thought I was prepared, but then the reality is something quite different. As much as I knew and had experienced the bits, it’s [pause] I didn’t realise. I don’t know – how prepared was I? Probably not very much at all but I got through it somehow.’ (head teacher 17)

Similarly head teacher 16 recounted:

‘[Qu: On reflection, how prepared were you for your early headship?] Not at all, not at all. The first day as head, for I’d say three years my learning curve was like that (motioning upwards in a steep 80 degree incline). Every day I’d think what’s that? Who’s phoned? Who are they? There were so many things that were nothing to do with my degree, the teaching, NPQH, that it was such a steep learning curve every single day. It was quite scary.’ (head teacher 16)

head teacher 11 had similar perceptions:

‘Not as prepared as I thought I was. I suppose it’s the accountability, I think having total ownership of everyone and everything as head is very different.’ (head teacher 11)

Supporting this are the views of head teacher 6:

‘I suppose what I wasn’t prepared for was how responsible everyone held you. Even when you’re acting, people are very nice to you when you’re acting. It’s different to when you are substantive. Yes, I felt very responsible very quickly for everybody and everything within the place.’ (head teacher 6)

Some (n=9) felt prepared or very prepared for their early headship experience. This subgroup had not experienced dissimilar preparation for headship compared to the group who felt unprepared; much of their perceptions of preparedness for their early headship experiences stems from the individual school circumstances they found themselves in.

As head teacher 2 described:

‘I was prepared in terms of the opportunities and the skills that X provided for me (at previous school in role as DHT) but I wasn’t prepared for the fact that the school wasn’t what I thought it was. I found out what it was really like and not what everybody said it was like. We were a little bubble here and to have to scrape it back from the bottom it was just not what I expected. I didn’t want to be here at all.’ (head teacher 2).

Very few (n=3) of this group of respondents felt very prepared as a result of working with an Executive head teacher or working as a co-head. This small group discuss positively the impact of the mentoring they received from either the Executive head teacher or co-head job share.

head teacher 3 discussed:

‘Compared to a lot of people probably really well prepared because I was in the same school and I had the safety net of an Executive head. I would say for the first six months X was incredibly mentoring. So unlike most Heads I did have a mentor but a mentor with an investment in the school. Not someone who worked for the LA or someone who was going to make five appointments (to see me) in a year or whatever.’ (head teacher 3)

Similarly head teacher 18 considered:

‘(good) preparation, I think yes most definitely, and I would say it was over those two years as co-head. So when the other head used to go, she would take her nameplate and slide mine in. Over time the fearful factor went and it grew into, I can do this, and I am going to do it, and I am going to do it well. I am going to do the best job I can.’ (head teacher 18).

4.13 Summary findings research question 2. ‘On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?’

The respondents interviewed all felt ready for headship and ready to apply after different but significant leadership experiences. This leadership experience took a variety of forms for LA based staff (n=2), those in very specific ‘Special Measures’ schools (n=2) or the main subgroup (n=16) who all worked in schools as deputy head teachers with a variety of Heads sharing and shaping their leadership experiences. The common theme for all of the interviewees is range of leadership experiences that presented themselves and the important role that their line manager, whomever this was, played in allowing and facilitating these experiences. As some respondents commented, this ‘apprenticeship’ – learning from and with an experienced leader in a rehearsal of the skills for when their own headships began, appears to be important to all of the interviewees in their preparation for and transition to headship. All had a polarised opinion of the role of NPQH in their preparation for and transition to headship, almost a 50-50 split of those who had positive perceptions and those who had less positive perceptions. All of the respondents experienced some kind of event, discussion or culmination of experiences that affirmed in their minds their readiness to apply for headship. Despite the vehicle that this ‘affirmation’ took, all felt a sense of empowerment following others’ perception that they were indeed

ready to succeed to a headship post. Despite the range of leadership experiences and routes to headship, most (n=15) felt less than fully prepared, on reflection, for the actual challenges of their early headship.

4.14 Research question 3. 'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?'

This research question is important to finally reflect upon the career paths and experiences of these early head teachers and their perceptions of the effectiveness of their preparation for headship. The themes emerging under this research question were:

- Pre-headship apprenticeship – the relationship with their head teacher and the role of coaching and mentoring.
- Freedom to experiment and make mistakes.
- Coping with the responsibility.
- Understanding the contextual factors of the role appointed to.
- Lack of understanding/experience of the wider role of head teacher.

Exploring the perceptions of head teachers on what supported them during their initial headship, their transformation into a new role; what was missing from their headship preparation.

The findings of this third research question will branch into themes identified from the thematic analysis of the respondents' transcribed interviews of what existed and what they experienced in terms of support for the preparation into headship. Finally, on reflection,

consider based on their perceptions what should be in place to support newly in post head teachers.

4.15 Theme 3.1 Pre-headship apprenticeship – the relationship with their head teacher and the role of coaching and mentoring.

Most of the respondents (n=17) discussed the importance of the role that their head teacher – pre succession, by respondents, to headship played in their preparation for and success in early headship. The respondents describe almost an ‘apprenticeship’ period whereby they learnt some of the knowledge, applied some of the leadership skills that, in their perception helped them survive their early headship.

As head teacher 2 described:

‘The apprenticeship with X. She involved me with everything budget setting, difficult conversations, pupil progress, data, health and safety. It was really good in terms of X and my experiences there, if I could be a X for my deputy or even a Y for my TLR’s then I think I am doing what people did for me’ (head teacher 2)

head teacher 6 discussed:

‘The head who I’d worked with as a deputy had been a very inclusive head. She’d involved me with a whole lot of whole school issues. She involved me with the strategic management in school, decisions that were made, action planning, the bread and butter stuff with finance and building work as well as teaching and learning. So I felt I had a good understanding of the whole-school issues.’ (head teacher 6)

head teacher 7:

‘My placement (NPQH) head was saying Just ask, because if you don’t it’s always in your head. So, having those Heads that are very supportive as well, well that school’s done it in this way and I’m going to take this from that school. I think having that wider experience to fill your toolbox of things that would help.’ (head teacher 7)

Of these (n=17) respondents, they all very strongly discussed the role of coaching and mentoring within their early headship. This group described the role of coach and mentor in their responses; it was clear that this group linked their early headship survival to the role of coaching and mentoring. The respondents may not have discussed an individual mentor, rather a supportive group or network; nevertheless the outcome was the same be it individual, group or network. The respondents' views are summarised well by the illustrative quotes below.

head teacher 1 discussed:

'Make sure you have a supportive network around you. When you come into a new situation, you really want somebody who understands things, that some things aren't easy, some things are quite challenging. I want to talk to somebody who can help me and help me solve things and help me think things through. I was looking for a coach rather than a mentor.' (head teacher 1)

head teacher 8:

'I think the whole ethos of coaching and the difference between coaching and mentoring. In that the coaching was, it was giving you an opportunity to talk about things without feeling that you were being judged or criticised or it was just a confidential forum. You could bring anything to it that you wanted, but you were going to be the one who resolved it.' (head teacher 8)

head teacher 13:

'It was learning from people, it's about teasing out the bits that you admire in somebody. I actually learnt a lot and the thing that helped my transition is working with some risk takers as well. Because I think it helps you stick your neck out a little bit.' (head teacher 13)

head teacher 17:

'Be honest and find a friend. Create a group of people, a group of likeminded professionals who you trust enough to discuss things with because it's quite isolating in this role.' (head teacher 17)

head teacher 18:

‘Support, it was a supported relationship between us (deputy head teacher & head teacher); we were well supported by Governors. That was a key.’ (head teacher 18)

head teacher 12:

‘Make sure you build up a network of fellow heads to support you and in your preparation explore all possible scenarios that you might face.’ (head teacher 12)

4.16 Theme 3.2 Freedom to experiment and make mistakes

Few (N=7) respondents discussed the importance of the role that their head teacher played, often at a point in the career where the respondents were fulfilling the deputy head role, of being allowed the freedom to practice their leadership skills. More than just leadership skill rehearsal though, it appears that the supportive climate and relationship between the two top senior leaders played an important role in developing these fledgling Heads for their own headship posts. The freedom to lead and take risks but with the knowledge that the climate was right, mistakes could be made without anything other than professional learning retribution. This, to the respondents, was a supportive atmosphere where the roles of head and deputy were almost interchangeable; a training ground for headship without the ultimate responsibility. This climate, support and leadership practice – thinking as the head teacher might – supported this group in their leadership growth. As head teacher 7 described:

‘ Well as an incident happened, she (head teacher) would ask me, ‘Why – put your head hat on, what would you do about that?’ I would sit there and answer whatever I thought was appropriate, and then she would give me advice and tell me what she thought she would do’ (head teacher 7)

This view is supported by head teacher 3:

‘I loved the working relationship with X, I needed the freedom to do my job but he also gave me enough support to get things right, if that makes sense. I didn’t have to ask permission, I just had to ask forgiveness if it went wrong. We used to talk all the time (to Executive HT)’ head teacher 3.

The comments below illustrate the range of responses on this theme, as head teacher 6 added about role inter-changeability:

‘The way the head worked with me when I was deputy. I’ve tried to do that with my deputy as well. I think head and deputy should be virtually interchangeable: their knowledge of the school and skill range.’ (head teacher 6)

head teacher 9 commented on the space to practice and make mistakes, leading to role growth and affirmation of readiness to succeed to headship:

‘It’s about working for someone who’s going to give you the time, opportunity and the knowledge so that you can practice and make mistakes. It’s about working for someone who will put you in a climate where they encourage you to take ownership and leadership.’ (head teacher 9)

head teacher 11:

‘ Sometimes you have to be in charge, because I was as a middle leader. It’s that you try to give them opportunities for that because if we try to do everything, which we can’t, it wouldn’t help them to build leaders for the future either.’ (head teacher 11)

4.17 Theme 3.3 Coping with the responsibility.

For some of the respondents (n=9), the change in role from Deputy to head teacher and the change in responsibility that this brings, weighed heavily on their minds. As head teacher 2 described:

‘The responsibility. I lie awake at night worrying about security and me and responsibility. If this place goes under... That’s a massive cross to bear. I got £50 more in my pay packet a month from going from Deputy to head here because I was going from two forms of entry to one. So for the money you wouldn’t do it. It was

about the stepping stone in terms of headship, but it's definitely the responsibility; the buck stops with me and that's quite scary.' (head teacher 2)

This group of respondents all felt similarly in terms of the responsibility for the whole school lay with them. head teacher 1 discussed:

'Suddenly I was responsible for everything. That's how it felt and that's how I feel about everything.' (head teacher 1)

As head teacher 4 mentioned, allowing a little time to reflect upon the challenges and responsibilities faced allowed these respondents more perspective on the, clearly, high pressured environment:

'Don't take it personally. Take a step back, find time to reflect. I found that very difficult. I think to a new head coming in, try and build time in. It means you can take a step back and look at what's happening from a distance really. You have to get things in perspective a little bit more, other wise you wouldn't cope, would you, with the everyday pressures of headship.' (head teacher 4)

head teacher 6:

' Don't just think it's Deputy headship with a bit more influence, it's not. It's completely different.' (head teacher 6)

head teacher 13:

'I think you think that you're going to be, that it isn't dissimilar (to deputy headship). You know you've got more responsibility and it's more people, more children, ultimately it's down to you. You also know that you are going to have the chance to put all these visionary things into place and you are running this school and you want it to be this kind of place. But what it doesn't prepare you for are the distractions that come along' (head teacher 13)

4.18 Theme 3.4 Understanding of the contextual factors of the role appointed to

For some (n=7) of the head teachers, the role to which they found themselves appointed was not the one they thought. None of the respondents suggested that the school in which

they found themselves as head teacher has deceived them or misrepresented the school through the application process. However as head teacher 2 recounted:

‘I don’t think I was under any illusions about the role of head teacher because I was doing it at X for the acting headship. However I’d found a school that wasn’t in the place I thought it was, not knowing the school had not been accurately sold to me’ (head teacher 2)

Similarly for head teachers 5 & 6:

‘I suppose I was coming to a quite different school (to the one I thought I was coming to). There are HR issues I wasn’t expecting.’ (head teacher 5)

‘I’d found I’d taken on a school that was not what I was led to believe it was when I applied for it.’ (head teacher 6)

For these respondents, despite their research of the schools they thought they were applying to and the selection process itself, the rhetoric and reality did not match. It appears that this misalignment of the actual situation of the school to the perceptions of the head teachers created additional burden at the start of the careers in headship of this group of respondents. As head teacher 18 added:

‘Do your homework I suppose, don’t just apply. I suppose doing your homework in terms of what jobs you are going to go for really, don’t just expect to walk into something. Know it’s the school for you or feel that. What skills can I offer? Am I the right person? Because you might not be.’ (head teacher 18)

4.19 Theme 3.5 Lack of understanding/experience of the wider role of the head teacher

For some of the respondents (n=10), a general lack of understanding of the wider role of the head teacher served as a significant challenge to these respondents. As head teacher 3 described:

‘The difference is how much a head has to think about compared to what I was doing before...so I suppose I didn’t have a big perspective on all the other bits and pieces.’ (head teacher 3)

For this group of respondents, the transformation to head teacher and the additional knowledge that this transformation brought to their understanding of the role of a head teacher, appeared almost overwhelming. As head teachers 4 and 8 discussed.

‘I think as well, it’s not until you actually do the job that you realise just how varied a role it actually is. You’d hear the head before talk about this, that and this and budget, budget and you’re thinking but it’s health and safety, asbestos, child protection it’s everything isn’t it? You’re spinning plates and juggling balls constantly.’ (head teacher 4)

‘I had a very limited knowledge through the circumstances. I wasn’t a Deputy that was highly involved in leadership. I only saw part of the role. I wasn’t involved in any of the decisions, or with local authority. I wasn’t particularly involved in any of the data assessment, tracking pupil progress and all that sort of thing, it didn’t happen.’ (head teacher 8)

Despite the range of preparatory experiences, career opportunities and leadership exposition that these respondents had experienced, it appears insufficient to fully prepare them for the role of head teacher. As head teachers 10 and 11 discussed.

‘I wouldn’t necessarily see the whole range of what the head’s job was. So I’d be coming at it from a teaching and learning hat. It’s only since the job, looking at obviously staffing, finance, buildings and all the other stuff that goes on that I’d had no experience of before that.’ (head teacher 10)

‘I did put in my performance management when I was appointed, about learning more about the finance, about learning more about health and safety...it’s that preparation for the other jobs a head teacher has to do as in the finance, governance.’ (head teacher 11)

Similarly for this group of respondents, there appears some similarity in term of the range of experiences missing from their headship preparation. It is clear that these respondents had

to learn 'on the job' very quickly so to ensure they felt able to meet the demands of their new role as head teacher. As head teacher 13 described:

'Personnel returns, finance things, premises, health and safety. I knew I would have to be ultimately responsible for that but when I came here, at first it was a big shock. Because I had to learn about an awful lot of things very quickly, that had not ever been on my radar.' (head teacher 13)

From this group of respondents (n=10), the feeling of not knowing or not understanding an aspect of the role of head teacher that they had not yet experienced, appeared to be of concern, as indicated from the illustrative responses below.

head teacher 14:

'I would have spent more time as a Deputy learning about the finance side of managing a school and the health and safety side of running a school. Because those are the two things that are thrown at you aren't they? When you become the head because really before that you don't have much experience of it do you?' (head teacher 14)

head teacher 15:

'The huge amount of responsibility being head really, that was the first thing that hit me, from being a Deputy. In the Deputy's role you are very driven aren't you with your subject areas and your roles and responsibilities as a senior leader. I was looking at health and safety, looking at problems in the school. If there is a leak in the toilet, if someone has turned up. It's just not knowing really. The not knowing how to deal with certain situations.' (head teacher 15)

head teacher 16:

'Not knowing what the paperwork was at all. I can remember the first day I was head, my site manager resigned. So I learnt a lot about opening the school up, and mopping the floors and cleaning routines. Straight away I learnt about the personnel procedures.' (head teacher 16)

4.20 Summary findings research question 3. 'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?'

For this group of respondents, the most common themes were grouped together, as identified through the thematic text analysis of responses. Few responses (n=3) shared themes that had few similarities with other responses and whilst valid and important, individual responses that did not share common themes were not presented within the findings.

Five themes represent the most common responses to this research question. Most of the respondents (n=17) discussed the importance of their head teacher, prior to the respondents succeeding to headship themselves, in their preparation and success in early headship. This role varied for respondents but appeared to promote, and allow and encourage a range of leadership opportunities for the then aspiring head teachers. This range of experiences has been drawn upon to support the respondents in their early careers as head teachers themselves. Leadership within a supportive framework of no blame and coaching and mentoring has, in the perception of these respondents supported them in the transition to and experience of early headship. For the respondents, the ultimate responsibility and understanding of the wider role of head teachers has been one of the most common perceptions of the challenges of early headship.

The next chapter, chapter 5, will systematically discuss each research question in turn, by themes identified within this chapter. Discursive links will be made to the literature to

critically discuss the findings and relate them to the academic knowledge base currently available.

Chapter 5

Discussion.

5.1 Introduction.

This chapter seeks to systematically discuss each research question in turn, by the themes identified within the findings chapter. This chapter will draw on the main tenets from the literature review to visibly address each research question in turn. Discursive links will be made to the literature to identify resonance and dissonance between the findings presented here and the literature available along with a critical discussion of the findings and literature.

This section is once again divided by research question and begins with a summary of findings; each section finishes with a summary addressing each research question. This chapter will draw upon the literature reviewed, the transcripts of respondents' interviews to build upon and emphasise links to highlight the contribution to knowledge about the journey to and survival of early headship. This chapter will propose additional ideas and conceptualisations of already established models of leadership development and seek to justify the amalgamation of these ideas based on the research evidence of the twenty respondents. These ideas include:

1. Early years talent spotting and the role of self-belief as an addition to the Browne-Ferrigno (2003) model.
2. Affirmation of readiness for headship and how this can be conceptualised within the current leadership development models
3. The apprentice head teacher and the role of apprenticeship in developing a sense of personal capacity in aspiring head teachers
4. Understanding the wider role of headship and the move from co-constructivism

(coaching and mentoring) to meta-learning (being aware of and taking control of one's own learning)

Summary findings research question 1. 'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?'

The majority (n=18) of head teachers interviewed took a linear and typically progressive approach to teaching of Secondary School, Further Education and Higher Education followed by career entry. Whilst the majority (n=19) did not aspire to headship at the start of their careers, many (n=15) had always known they wanted to teach following good personal experiences at school or encouragement, inspiration or the desire to emulate teachers they had themselves experienced during their education. Most (n=15) did not receive any significant formal induction or support. This group's experiences with fellow colleagues, a mentor or wider staff ethos and culture of the institution they found themselves in served to shape their early ideas of effective teaching, learning and early leadership through the coaching and mentoring they experienced. The effectiveness of this coaching and mentoring allowed many (n=15) to be 'talent spotted' by their head teachers as models of teaching good practice; this in turn led to the identification of potential talent for leadership and early career promotion. In all cases, this led to leadership roles within the first three years of their teaching careers, fledgling leaders having the opportunity to lead on some aspect of school provision.

5.2 Themes 1.1; 1.2 – 1.1 the route to teaching and 1.2 the catalyst or motivation to teach.

Within the group of respondents interviewed, many (n=15) had always wanted to teach. For this group, their motives to teach shared some resonance with the work of Brookhart and

Freeman (1992); Papanastasiou and Papanastasiou (1998); Watt and Richardson (2007) and Thomson et al., (2011). For the head teachers interviewed, it was clear that within the group who had always wanted to teach, altruistic values and positive prior teaching experiences were noted as responses indicating this group's motivation to teach. Indeed summatively, all responses across the 20 head teachers struck a chord with the categories of motivation to teach reviewed within the literature. Altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic factors all appeared within the transcripts (see Kyriacou and Coulthard, 2000). The respondents' motivations to teach ranged from familial support; love of teaching itself; desire to share the passion they have for one or more national curriculum subjects; desire to inspire a love of learning in their students similarly to the love of learning inspired in the respondents by their own teachers. All of these responses support an altruistic or intrinsic motivation; whilst a few respondents cited the need to earn money after completing their degrees as a motivator, this suggested a clear extrinsic motivation but was in the minority of responses given. The responses may suggest a simple link between the altruistic or intrinsic motivations playing a stronger role in the careers and lives of head teachers or aspiring head teachers.

The response to the first question of the semi-structured interview was designed to be the 'ice-breaker' question (see Denscombe, 2010) to put the interviewees at their ease. A brief synopsis of the route that led to teaching, before more detailed responses on their path to leadership, ensued. Nevertheless, the responses provide some small insight into their motivations to teach. One theme emerging from the literature on this area of motivation is the suggested link between intrinsic motivation providing greater task engagement and enjoyment for the newly in post (as the respondents were at that time) class teachers.

Whilst not part of this thesis, it is worth reflecting on the number of respondents who

shared an intrinsic motivation and the struggle to survive the early part of their teaching careers. Empirical data within the literature is unclear in establishing a direct link between work ethic, enjoyment and longitudinal leadership career to the motivational factor to enter teaching. Motivation and staying power may be useful areas for further research, particularly in light of the views of head teachers in the early part of their headship. It may be that the motivation to teach plays a part in the longer term 'staying power' at one particular point in time of a leader's career. The work of Watt and Richardson (2007) makes tentative links between these early career motivations and longer-term career development. Whilst still an early area of research and arguably one which may be overly simplistic; linking these early motivational factors and attempting to establish empirical data to support the claim that intrinsic motivations to teach may help to identify a pre-disposition to a leadership role. Despite the potential limitations, it is worth considering the possibility that future leaders' success, career path, enjoyment and staying power may be linked to their motivations to join the teaching profession. The notional idea that intrinsic motivation to teach may in some way affect the 'personal capacity' of the aspirant head teachers by adding to their staying power in terms of the journey through their early careers and into early headship incumbency. For the purpose of transparency, it is important to signpost where the notion of 'personal capacity' comes from. From the respondents interviewed it was clear that at differing points within their career up to and including early headship, there were a variety of professional hurdles to overcome. The range and depth of these professional hurdles varied from respondent to respondent and often were situational context specific. Nevertheless, these hurdles were the challenges that these respondents faced and their motivation to overcome these hurdles without 'giving in' or leaving the

profession appears linked to the personal capacity of these respondents to 'keep going and not give in'.

Two illustrative quotes from head teachers 2 & 10:

'It was nothing like it at all, nothing like it. I suppose the biggest difference was just going home completely drained at six or seven o'clock every night and being asleep by half past nine. Getting up and just doing it, okay it was a different day, but just how physically draining it was. I was not prepared for that at all.... My perception of the role was, come here and raise standards in this school, and the fact that the teaching is now 85% good or better, there's inadequate teaching across the school which there was when I started. Standards this year are going to be above the national, etc. I can cope with all that. The thing that I wasn't prepared for was parents, parents fighting outside the school gates. Particular members of staff, and staff expecting you to have the answer to absolutely everything, like how to unblock the bloody toilets.' (head teacher 10)

'I think that every time I turned around, there was some big hazard to be sorted. It was just so hard. Then, to get through Ofsted where we nearly went into a category... We literally scraped through. The staff needed to know I was on their side and I wasn't trying to be awful, but these things needed sorting.... Motivating some of those children who had it just so hard, it's what kept (me) going in the morning. It got you up in the morning.' (head teacher 2)

Intrinsic motivation may add to personal capacity, through dogged determination and staying power which may also be linked to confidence and self-perception of role mastery. This idea adds to the work of Browne-Ferrigno (2003) and the model of leadership transformation. Whilst intrinsic motivation and personal capacity is not directly part of the model proposed by Browne-Ferrigno (2003), there is certainly scope to explore the role of personal capacity in leadership transformation (see figures 3 and 4). The challenge of the journey to and early part of headship has been established within this thesis, personal capacity may well support this journey to senior leadership and sit within the models of leadership development, such as Browne-Ferrigno (2003), supporting aspiring leaders on

their difficult journey. It would appear from this research that personal capacity, the ability to overcome difficulties in terms of the journey to senior leadership and during the transformation to head teacher or principal is important. The importance overall of this new aspect is still uncertain on the journey to senior leadership, however, what can be inferred as a direct result of this research is that for this group of respondents, the desire to teach for whichever reason, acted as a catalyst during more professionally difficult times. This notion of personal capacity can be injected into the Browne-Ferrigno (2003) model of leadership transformation as an addition to the well established model already presented, this will be shown later within this work (see figure 5). The theme and idea of self-confidence, affirmation of readiness will be returned to further, within this chapter. However, it may be argued that over the fullness of time and a career moving toward headship, what real influence or longer-term factor can be attributed to these early career motivations? This may well benefit from further research and study as there is some evidence presented here, within the findings chapter, that many (n=15) of the respondents had 'always wanted to teach' and were now head teachers.

5.3 Theme 1.3 – Early career support

The role of coaching and mentoring in developing staff at all levels is well established within the UK and internationally (Rhodes et al., 2004; Kennedy, 2005; Brundrett and Crawford, 2008; Bush, 2008; Rhodes, 2012b). Indeed as a tool for bringing about personal, professional, career wide and institutional based improvements or gains, there is a growing literature base that attests the importance of the framework of coaching and mentoring and its use. However, as these respondents noted, there was very little support in a structured,

coherent, planned systematic approach to the interviewee's career entry. 'Here's the class, get on with it' provides a fair summary of the perceptions of the respondents on the actuality of the early support they received. It may be that at the point in time that the respondents entered their teaching career, the importance of career entry support, coaching and mentoring may well have been less understood and as established as it is now.

Nevertheless, the experiences of these respondents all share similarities with the lack of a systematic programme to support the needs of the respondents. However, what was a common theme, despite the limitations of the planned programmes of their career induction, 15 of the respondents all identified that they did have a coach/mentor during those early days of teaching. From the respondents, it would appear that three quarters got through their early careers despite the lack of systematic, planned support in some part as a result of the ad-hoc coaching and mentoring by a more experienced colleague. It is likely that these early career experiences of coaching and mentoring resulted in shaping the professional identity of these future leaders. For good or for ill, the climate of coaching and mentoring supported these future leaders in surviving early teaching.

The definitions of coaching and mentoring have been established (see Rhodes, 2012b), a generally accepted view of these two facets of support is to, through coaching and mentoring, bring about improvements in individual and institutional performance.

Coaching, a learning relationship between individuals, concerned with raising individual performance. Mentoring is a learning relationship that includes coaching, but also includes broader support; counselling, career development and access to wider learning opportunities. It is unclear from the respondents whether, as there was little in the way of formal induction or support, the use of mentors was a strategic planning and leadership tool

of the incumbent head teachers. Coaching and mentoring may have been more of the view of the wider staff within the school as a supportive mechanism to other colleagues. This is not a criticism of the semi-structured interviews; this aspect of whose direction this mentor support came from is beyond the scope of this thesis. With that in mind, it is useful to take a non-judgmental and neutral view of where this provision came from.

The respondents discuss the general ethos within the school; comments made illustrate this well, team work; working in parallel; whole school culture; availability of time; nurture. One such example from the interviews conducted regarding climate and culture:

‘...that was just the ethos of the school; everybody worked together, everybody made themselves available. It was a very professionally nurturing environment, and everybody just did it automatically. If there was a problem, you went and found someone who could help you solve that problem. We supported each other. It was about staff utilising each other’s skills in order to improve other people’s teaching in aspects they didn’t feel particularly confident in. Because that was the culture and climate of the place.’ (head teacher 1)

These comments would agree with the NCSL (2005) framework for coaching. This document sets out a framework for the successful implementation of coaching and makes the point that the willingness of staff undertaking the programme along with their openness and honesty is important to the effectiveness and success of the programme. As Coleman (2002) discusses, mentoring can be used to increase performance and motivation, ‘I believe in you’, that fosters and can encourage a belief in the mentee of belief, trust and desire of the mentor/school wide culture for success. As Panayioutou (2012) argues, there is little empirical evidence to judge the impact of this programme, however, it could be argued from this study that there is some measure of success from this programme of mentoring. Considering all 15 of the respondents that identified their experience of a coach or mentor in

their early career support, all had succeeded in reaching the position of head teacher; this may be attributed in some small way to mentoring. As Kilburg (2007) and Rhodes (2012b) note, coaching and mentoring is not without criticism as a programme of support; cost, mentor selection, training, age difference, gender differences, power, the potential of the mentee to become too dependent upon the mentor are all inherent dangers. There is, however, little to suggest that these factors impacted upon the respondents in a negative way. It may be argued that as a result of the early mentoring the respondents received, they successfully completed those early years and remained in teaching; aspirant leaders need to become established within the profession if they are to progress within it. Rhodes and Brundrett argue (2009) that the learning culture of an institution, leadership for learning is important in establishing the effectiveness of these mentoring programmes. This view has some resonance with the respondents' interviews and it may be argued that without a culture of leadership learning being established, effective and understood by all stakeholders that the effectiveness of these programmes may well be diminished. In an Australian study, Blackman (2010) argues that coaching and mentoring can make a contribution to recruitment and retention; there may be a link between the respondents remaining within teaching long enough to secure a more senior leadership position although the establishment of this would require further study. It is possible to link, from the perception of these respondents, that without the mentors they encountered at this early stage of their careers, they may not have been successful and remained within the teaching profession. Certainly, the mentor programme allowed these respondents to, if nothing else, teach successfully and receive some recognition from either the mentor and/or more senior leaders within the school. Taken in isolation, the ideas presented within this theme are not,

in themselves new nor do they contribute to the knowledge base. However, where there may be a contribution to knowledge is in the role of coaching and mentoring in supporting, driving, realising and bringing about, for these respondents, their role conceptualisation, socialisation and role-identity transformation. As Browne-Ferrigno (2003), Gronn (1999), Ribbins (2003), Earley and Weindling (2007) all point out the transformative process of becoming a head teacher or principal can be partially brought about by carefully developed internship experiences. For these respondents here, it appears that although somewhat ad-hoc in its nature, the coaching and mentoring that they experienced and through this, the taste of and some success in early leadership mastery and belonging played a strong role during the early part of their careers. The culture of and success in the effective use of coaching and mentoring to support new career entrants and indeed for the duration of a career to and beyond first headship appears important in developing leadership capacity and the talent pool of the future. There is strong evidence from these respondents, three quarters of the sample, that without this coaching and mentoring they may not have succeeded in continuing within the profession. Here, coaching and mentoring has played a significant role in shaping these, as they were then, leaders of the future in terms of their initial professional identity and beyond. It may well be that a modification of the Browne-Ferrigno (2003) model of leadership development is appropriate to better inform incumbents, trainers and researchers whereby professional growth has a somewhat cyclical nature in the lives and careers of leaders. That is to say, where Browne-Ferrigno (2003) identifies purposeful engagement based upon career aspiration to make the transition to principal/head teacher that, in fact, this transitional phase repeats itself. The respondents here would suggest that they experienced earlier transition phases, supported by the

coaching and mentoring they received that supported their personal and professional growth. I have established through the literature that role and identity transformation at the point of headship and indeed throughout other career point transformations e.g. from a class teacher to middle leader makes an important contribution to the perceptions of success or otherwise of leaders at all levels. The contribution to knowledge of the importance of coaching and mentoring throughout careers to support leadership transformation in the widest context would merit further study and academic research.

5.4 Theme 1.4 – Early talent spotting leading to early leadership experience.

The effectiveness of this coaching and mentoring, school self-review, performance management or other mechanism of staff appraisal allowed many of the respondents (n=15) to be ‘talent spotted’ by their head teachers as models of teaching good practice; this in turn led to identification of potential talent for leadership and early career promotion. In all cases, this led to leadership roles within the first three years of their teaching careers, fledgling leaders having the opportunity to lead on some aspect of school provision. It is worth noting that whilst there is a strong argument here that good teaching led to the identification of potential future leadership, it cannot be argued that good teaching is always an indicator of good leadership potential, and some caution must be exercised here; good teachers may not want to become leaders.

Three quarters of the respondents were identified, within the first three years of their teaching career, as having the potential to develop further leadership skills. The importance of talent management will be discussed here as it appears that without these respondents being ‘spotted’ early in their careers, they may not have succeeded to headship. The

importance of personal capacity has already been established in terms of early career survival. This personal capacity continues to play an important part of the talent management, quite simply – can the aspiring leaders ‘cut it’? Once this has been established, in terms of teaching ability there appears to be the transformation to leader through the opportunities presented to them – can they ‘do it’? Talent management and identification is a growing field of research and has links beyond the educational sphere into the business realm. The term and understanding of talent management and recognition of talent is not a universally accepted or defined term however, in a recent (2012a) paper, Rhodes defines talent spotting as follows:

- (1) Talent management as a collection of Human Resource Management practices such as recruitment, development and succession management;
- (2) Talent management as a focus on developing and growing internal talent pools as part of succession and workforce planning;
- (3) Talent management with a focus on the direct management of talented individuals, both high performers and those with high potential, who are to be encouraged and rewarded perhaps at the expense of low performers who may be replaced by those with greater perceived talent.
- (4) Talent management as the identification of key roles rather than key individuals. This is a strategic approach involving high-ability talent pool development to fill these key roles coupled with mechanisms to ensure their continued commitment to the organisation. (1-3 Lewis and Heckman, 2006 in Rhodes, 2012: pp.443; 4 Collings and Mellahi, 2009 in Rhodes, 2012a: pp.443)

This has strong interconnections with the respondents’ interviews, notably with reference to definitions (2) and (3). In an earlier work, Rhodes et al. (2008) identified a list of core competencies that were perceived as important characteristics indicative of leadership talent. See table 2.

The key competencies of 'being a very good teacher' (characteristic 12) and 'is a competent teacher' (characteristic 15) are lower on the list than to be expected. Rhodes et al., (2008) explain that this may well be attributable to the fact that it is already established that being a 'good teacher' is a core requisite for leadership positions and so the respondents in Rhodes et al., (2008) study may well have assumed this before discussing other characteristics.

Certainly, from the respondents' perceptions in this research, this characteristic was very important in their identification as potentially leaders of the future. The notion of being a good teacher as the catalyst to talent identification presents no new idea in itself. However what is a potential extension of the current leadership development frameworks is the notion that early identification of talent, within three years of beginning their professional career, and the subsequent opportunities given to these 'spotted' leaders is important in leadership development. From the respondents represented here, this early talent spotting led to leadership opportunities that in turn led to the beginning of the transformation to becoming leaders. Early talent spotting was the start of their leadership journey and the beginning of their transformation to becoming leaders and not just teachers, with the beginning of this journey, a re-start of their perceptions of personal capacity. These relatively new to the profession teachers have succeeded in demonstrating a talent as a good teacher; they have proven themselves within the classroom arena. However whilst they may well be a proven teacher, they represent at this point within their careers an unproven leader. I would argue that there is a transformative shift in practice, thinking and actions at this point in the careers of these future leaders, arguably a transformative shift in practice and thinking to this new leadership role. With this transformation, a new role conceptualisation begins; do these new leaders have the personal capacity to succeed in this

new role? Whilst Browne-Ferrigno (2003) argues that this transformation begins during the change to a senior leader, I would argue that this research supports an earlier transformation. This earlier transformation is a parallel of the shift argued in Browne-Ferrigno's model (2003) and represents a parallel in the role socialisation and transformation, merely at a lower career stage, this will be discussed further within this work (see figure 3 below). Other key characteristics mentioned by the respondents of what their head teacher identified in them included subject knowledge, work ethic, and initiative. This research would suggest that effective teaching can lead to being 'talent spotted' and this in turn may lead to leadership opportunities that provide the first steps in leadership transformation.

The notion of leadership transformation can be represented by the simple figure below, see figure 3.

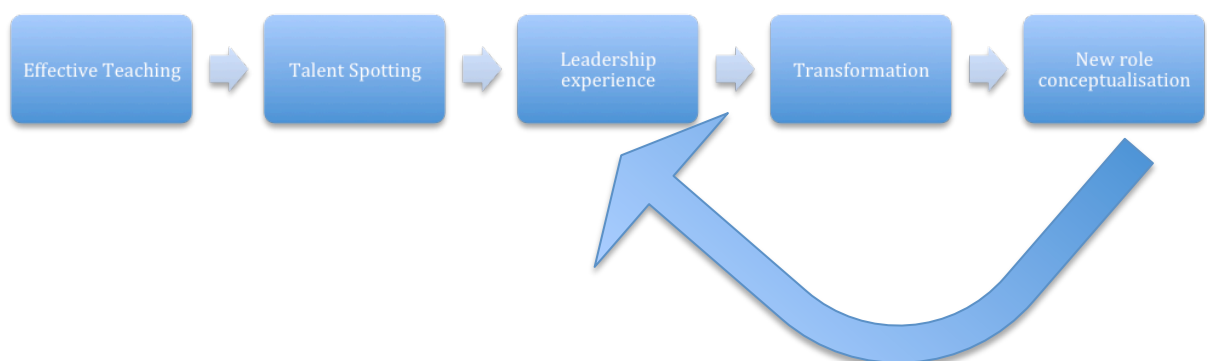


Figure 3. Flow chart of leadership transformation cycle

It is without doubt that the characteristic referred to more frequently than others was the early identification of key teaching competencies. Some of the importance attributed to the key teaching competency may well be related to the contextual circumstances that the respondents found themselves in during the early part of their career. Schools in OFSTED categories of concern have a heightened sense of importance of shedding that OFSTED category and as such, retention and development of effective teachers would be of great concern and need for leaders. However, for many of the schools, there was no such category of concern affecting the direction and focus of the schools and the characteristic of 'competent teacher' was still a large factor of talent identification of these respondents. The respondents within this study all experienced some form of leadership task or role within their schools. In essence, these leaders of the future had comparatively, early experience of leadership. The actuality of the experience that these leaders had supports the view of Rhodes et al., (2008) and Bush (2008) who all make the point that it should be policy and practice, supported by government and the key responsibility of incumbent leaders to establish a training ground for these potential leaders. However, the view supported by Rhodes et al., (2008) and Bush (2008) of leadership and leadership experiences becoming policy and practice is contested, and not all agree. Whilst it would appear that leadership development programmes are becoming widely recognised as 'leadership badges,' some argue that this promotes a 'one size fits all approach' that may not support leadership development and school improvement. Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) strongly contest the notion of homogenised one-size fits all view of leadership development. The authors argue that the leadership standards that are attributed to the associated development courses (e.g. NPQH, NPQML) are prescribed and through this prescription inhibit and diminish

leadership potential. Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) argue that the dictation of leadership skills and behaviours along with the direction of what leaders should do or enact at different points in time may well reduce the potential for effective leadership and school improvement. Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) believe that following an overly prescriptive leadership model can create an organisational and leadership hierarchy that Fitzgerald and Gunter suggest is linked to nothing more than a management strategy and not a radical alternative for schools and leaders. Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) argue that the performance and league table culture created drives a pre-conceived notion of leadership and effective leadership practices that in some way supports one way of being 'on-message'. This message, they argue, is driven by policy agendas that can diminish the true effectiveness of leadership practices. As Thomson (2009) argues, an overemphasis on prescribed material may well result in a failure to experiment that in turn may lead to lost opportunities for leadership to impact on learning or improvement. From the respondents here, there is little to suggest that they share the view of Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) or Thomson (2009). However, it may be that the respondents are unable to disassociate themselves from their leadership experiences or their perceptions of the 'on-message, one way to lead' that they may have assimilated from their career paths so far.

There is some agreement with Macbeath (2006) too, who suggests that seeking internal talent from the 'training ground' whilst watching the external scenery of potential talent too is important in talent identification and management. However, there is some disagreement with Rhodes (2008) where it is argued 'self-disclosure' by aspiring middle leaders is important for talent identification. For these respondents, for whatever reason, they were 'spotted' rather than by self-disclosure. It is unclear from the respondents why self-

disclosure did not occur, it may be that incumbent leaders need to make it clear to their staff and stakeholders that self-disclosure is indeed to be encouraged to further add to the emerging talent pool. This self-disclosure is in some way more formal announcement of the self-belief that an aspirant leader is ready for some further leadership challenge, task or role. Rhodes (2012a) argues, the understanding of self-belief and its role in leadership enactment remains unclear and more work is needed in this area. It may well be that more research is needed in this area, however, I would argue that this emergent characteristic may well support its integration into current theoretical frameworks for leadership identity and transformation. Self-realised belief or nurtured 'I believe in you and your potential skills' to grow a sense of well grounded self-belief appears important to this research and models of leadership development. The growing literature on talent management and identification is developing, however, the links between the academic research and practical considerations 'in the field' are less well established. One such example is how the characteristics of potential leadership are identified and evidenced through formal and informal school-based structures e.g. Performance Management/Appraisal of staff. This may well form an important area for further study to build upon models of leadership development already established and potentially insert these, yet to be defined structures, as one possible vehicle to identify the potential leadership talent pool of the future. Sitting, arguably uncomfortably, alongside the structures in place for Performance Management/Appraisal is referred to within the literature as the 'gut –feeling' of incumbent leaders of the capacity of staff to succeed as leaders of the future. As Rhodes et al., (2008) argue this may well be a destructive trait that may lend itself to identification of similar characteristics of those

shown within the incumbent leader – like begets like – and so reduce the potential pool of leaders by narrowing the field of view.

It is worth questioning the validity of the ‘talent spotted’ within schools by incumbent leaders. It is clear from the National standards for Teachers and the non-statutory standards for head teachers that the development of others is important and to be encouraged.

Indeed one of the differences between a teacher paid on the main-scale of salary compared to those on the upper pay spine or indeed those on the leadership scale is the requisite to support the development of others. (Teachers’ standards, 2012

[<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>. Accessed 15-11-2013])

How effectively managed and established the ‘talent spotting’ agenda is within schools remains unclear and linked to this is how effective and objective the skills of the ‘spotters’ are. Indeed, are all leaders equally effective and skilled at talent spotting, management and subsequent talent development? The literature is unclear at this time as to how effective these aspects are. What is clear is the growing importance of this aspect in the leadership pool for the future, and this is strongly supported by the ‘talent spotting’ that these respondents experienced.

Regardless of the mechanism of their identification of potential talent, these respondents all were charged with managing some area of school provision, comparatively early within their school teaching careers. This recognition and early leadership opportunity served to provide what is arguably an important early leadership opportunity that may well have impacted on the respondents’ future leadership roles and responsibilities. I would argue that this research supports the addition of developing self-belief through structured leadership

training grounds and activities that in itself affirms or re-focuses leadership activities toward the transformation to middle and senior leadership. I am not arguing that there is any one model of structured leadership development that should be prescribed over any other potential model of structured leadership development. Furthermore, I am not arguing that a 'one size fits all' model should be adopted. However, I am arguing that leadership development itself should be structured. This research supports the view that leadership activities should start early within the careers of teachers and that the experience of bringing about some school improvement based change, successful or otherwise, leads to leadership learning. That is to say, by supporting aspiring leaders through a range of leadership activities and experiences; this builds capacity and self-belief. These two factors appear key in the success or otherwise of the transition to and transformation into a senior leader. I have argued that belief in itself is insufficient to support successful leadership without an array of leadership key competencies. However an element of informed self-belief, self-belief evidenced through success of otherwise in leadership roles and activities has a place within the socialisation of and transition to leadership at many levels. The factors affecting transition to leadership can be summarised in figure 4 below, a force field representation of the factors affecting transition to leadership. 'Affirmation of readiness' appears within the model and is discussed in more detail further in this work (see page 153). As I have argued, it is these factors that affect the transition to leadership across the journey to headship from a class teacher to a senior leader and repeat at various stages of career progression and ultimately in the transition and transformation to headship.

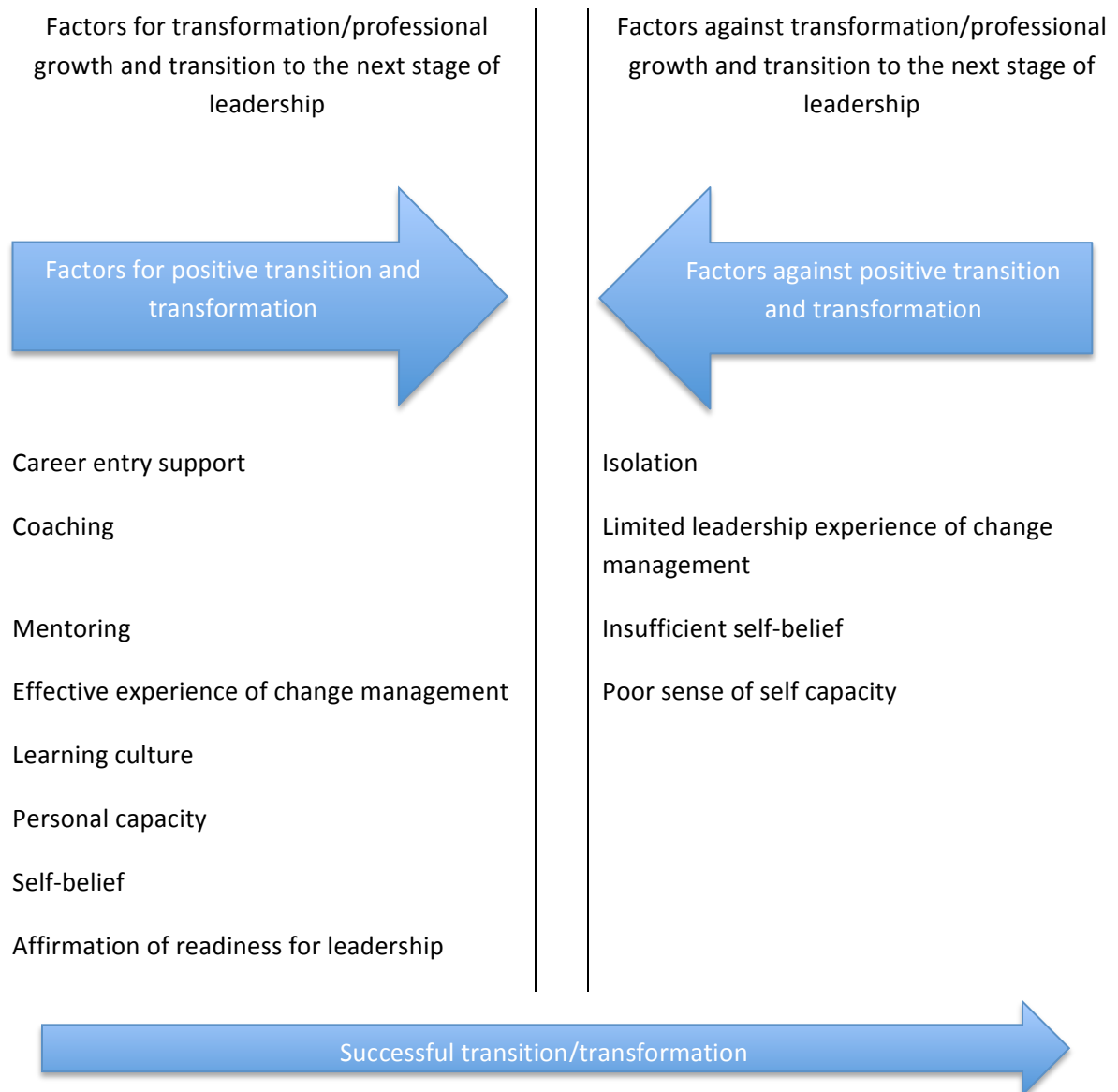


Figure 4 – Force field representation of factors affecting the transition and transformation to leadership.

5.5 Summary of the discussion of research question 1 - 'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?'

Respondents' motivations to teach may have an impact upon their choice of teaching as a career path and may have an impact upon their future leadership careers. The impact of intrinsic motivation to teach appears to play some part in developing a sense of personal capacity. This notion of personal capacity appears to help during early career survival and further play a part in later leadership development by adding to the 'staying power' of aspiring leaders. I have argued that this notion of personal capacity supports an amended leadership model of career development, and I propose its injection into the well - established model by Browne-Ferrigno (2003). The importance of a mentor in respondents' induction to and early success as teachers has been important in their journey to headship as this early effective mentoring has allowed the respondents to be identified as an effective teacher. The respondents were identified, rather than self-disclosed and as such may have important implications for the incumbent leaders currently in post. This identification of the respondents as effective teachers, above and separate to other potential leadership characteristics, led to a 'first taste' of leadership opportunities. For these respondents, the leadership opportunities came relatively early within their careers, across the group of respondents, before year three of their teaching lives. These leadership opportunities provided a training ground for leadership development, retention and identification of potential talent pool for the future. Important parallels can be drawn between established leadership development models and the role that coaching and mentoring have played in shaping these, as they were then, leaders of the future in terms of their initial professional identity and beyond. It may well be that a modification of the Browne-Ferrigno (2003)

model of leadership development is appropriate whereby professional growth has a somewhat cyclical nature in the lives and careers of leaders. The importance of early career mentorship, from these respondents cannot be underestimated. The climate and culture within the institutions of career support led to these respondents being talent spotted. There is an important distinction between being 'spotted' and self-disclosing. This has important implications for leadership development models and the role of incumbent leaders to identify and develop through career opportunities these 'spotted' candidates. Adding the role of talent management alongside a framework of coaching and mentoring may well lead to a future pool of potential senior leaders. This idea of talent management supports its insertion into current leadership development frameworks as argued within this chapter, the Browne-Ferrigno (2003) model of leadership transformation. These ideas will be developed and summarised through an amended and proposed model of leadership development in the final chapter, see figure 5 below, overleaf.



Figure 5. Amended model of Browne-Ferrigno (2003) leadership transformation, a new conceptualisation of factors affecting role identity and transformation.

5.6 Summary findings research question 2. 'On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?'

The respondents interviewed all felt ready for headship and ready to apply after different but significant leadership experiences. This leadership experience took a variety of forms for LA based staff (n=2), those in very specific 'Special Measures' schools (n=2) or the main sub-group (n=16) who all worked in schools as Deputy head teachers with a variety of Heads sharing and shaping their leadership experiences. All had a polarised opinion of the role of NPQH in their preparation for and transition to headship, almost a 50-50 split of those who

had positive perceptions and those who had less positive perceptions. Another common theme for all of the interviewees is range of leadership experiences that presented themselves and the important role that their line manager, whomever this was, played in allowing and facilitating these experiences. As some respondents commented, this 'apprenticeship' – learning from and with an experienced leader in a rehearsal of the skills for when their own headships began, appears to be important to all of the interviewees in their preparation for and transition to headship. Despite the range of leadership experiences and routes to headship, most (n=15) felt less than fully prepared, on reflection, for the actual challenges of their early headship.

This section will diverge into three inter-related themes. First, the role of NPQH on the respondents perception of readiness for headship; next affirmation of readiness and the building of self-belief leading to headship application and successfully gaining their first post and, finally, a reflection on the actuality of their preparedness for headship as compared to the respondents perceptions on the real life challenges that they faced. The themes within this section mirror those contained in the findings chapter and follow the same order for continuity.

5.7 Theme 2.1 NPQH perceived as a positive experience – Networking, face-to-face sessions and the final assessment.

Some respondents (n=11) reported a positive perception of NPQH; other respondents (n=9) reported less positive perceptions of NPQH and its role in the preparation for and transition to headship. It appears that the respondents are split into two distinct groups, those whose

perceptions are more positive about NPQH and those whose perceptions are less positive about NPQH; all of the interviewees had a polarised opinion of NPQH.

Where the respondents shared a positive perception of the role of NPQH, the identified strengths of NPQH centred around two key areas; networking via the Face-to-face sessions, reflection time and the impact of this reflection time on their own understanding of their 'affirmation of readiness' for headship. For the purpose of the findings chapter, I included in the 'face-to-face' section any aspect of the NPQH programme where course facilitators led or facilitated learning e.g. the actual face-to-face INSET days, school based projects or final assessment. This is separate and distinct to the non face-to-face sessions of NPQH where, for example, respondents may have been completing on-line learning self-study.

Perceptions of the strengths of NPQH have been established through the literature, a recent example is from Crawford and Earley's review of NPQH in 2011. In this review Crawford and Earley claim that the most positive aspects of the NPQH programme centre around the personalised or bespoke nature of the programme; school placements (or leadership development visits); coaching, and peer networks.

This resonated strongly with the respondents and a representative quote of the respondents who agreed with these elements is captured well by:

'...the feedback that I had from the NPQH people running it were 'Yes, that is exactly what we are looking for. These are all of your strengths.' To see someone actually point those out and talk to me about my strengths was the first time that had happened. You have all your strengths and then your developments.' (head teacher 8)

For the respondents who took part in this research, none undertook the first pilot or early revised NPQH programme. As Brundrett (2006) argues, the model of NPQH has evolved and continues to be developed and had been implemented following NCSL's Leadership Development Framework from 2001, something that itself had been built upon a synthesis of the previous six years work on leadership development programmes. Pre-introduction of formal headship and senior leadership development programmes, Bolam (2004) uses the term 'ad-hoc' to describe the provision for the preparation for, induction of and further training of head teachers pre the NCSL model of 2001. Bush and Jackson's review from 2002 adds an international perspective on a number of leadership development centres visited, operating with the brief to support, organise and run programmes for aspiring principals. Here they conclude that the provision across the nine countries visited did not appear to have a coherent package of development for aspiring, beginning and experienced head teachers or principals. One strong strand emerging from the respondents and the literature is the view of participants on the time spent with experienced colleagues. Respondents discussed those who have already succeeded to and experienced beyond the early years of headship as part of the course facilitation, giving a genuine 'warts and all' view of the job of headship itself.

'The face-to-face days, at that point you had four face-to-face days and those were good in the sense of contact with people and learn about their establishments and that they've done and so on...I guess the contact with similarly minded people. It was just about being able to discuss different issues really, in quite challenging circumstances. That sort of, I suppose, taught you how to cope. That was useful, that contact with others.' (head teacher 5)

Despite the established and growing work on models of leadership development, the lack of a coherent package of leadership development programmes, to support aspiring leaders of

the future may well be counter productive against the drive to identify, nurture and develop leaders of the future. The growing notion of leadership development being an evolutionary process may suggest that, in a similar way the transformative journey that aspiring leaders move through, that leadership development programmes should seek to 'join-up' their intended leadership learning outcomes to better serve the leadership talent pool of the future. Gronn (1999); Ribbins (2003); Day and Bakioglu (1996); Earley and Weindling (2007) all make reference to the importance of each stage in their leadership career models. Browne-Ferrigno's suggestion of a transformational move into principalship, role conceptualisation, socialisation and role transformation further support the notion of these stages of development being hierarchal. It may be that more joined-up thinking between policies; politics, theory and practice would better serve the needs of the leaders of the future. That is to say structured, long-term view of leadership development may well better support leaders of the future rather than disparate, compartmentalised leadership development programmes pitched at different points in the leadership development of aspiring head teachers. I have previously discussed the opposing view to a joined up and co-ordinated approach to leadership development. In the view of Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) and Thomson (2009) amounts to nothing more than leaders whose leadership is diminished for fear of not taking a risk or being found to be 'off message' as a result of unrelenting pressure from policy agendas and the accountability culture.

The route to headship itself is not always straightforward and for some, women in particular along with ethnic minorities, there are barriers to headship succession. Career breaks for families, perceptions of the impact of gender and ethnicity on the capability or otherwise to fulfil the role of a head teacher do appear as potential barriers to these groups, Fuller (2009)

and Coleman (2002). The models of leadership development and advancement to headship do not take into account 'life getting in the way.' Personal and familial events may well affect the route taken to the length of time in succeeding to headship. Supporting aspirant leaders who have taken a career break may well provide one element of the succession planning and leadership crisis solution.

This research supports the view that there is not 'one way' to lead, and the differing contextual factors that these respondents found themselves in is strong evidence that 'one size' does not prepare an aspiring leader for the challenges of headship. This research does support the view that there are leadership development experiences that can support the personal capacity and self-belief of head teachers. These experiences in turn support the transition to and transformation into a senior leader. There are some generic leadership competencies that aspiring leaders may well need to draw upon through the early part of headship, but these competencies cannot in themselves be planned for in totality. The unknown and unplanned for challenges of early headship require leaders to draw on their personal capacity, informed by a range of leadership experiences that support in helping leaders to make the right decisions. The contextual factors affecting headship is discussed under research question three.

I would propose, based on the respondents here and the literature critiqued that leadership development programmes take a longitudinal view of career leaders' needs. Leadership development joining together the already established programmes that refines and defines these needs against the needs identified within the current academic literature. However,

there are implications on policy, organisation and costs associated with this longitudinal view; it may not be possible in some international countries.

Bush and Jackson (2002) warn that, despite the international need for leaders of the future, dangers exist in merely transplanting a model, or successful elements of models, from one nation to another. It may well be counter-productive, but Bush and Jackson argue there is good potential for mutual learning via the international leadership development centres. There appears to be a gap in the literature on the cross-border evaluation of the most effective elements of leadership development programmes and this area would benefit from further research and joint evaluation and subsequent learning to maximise the international knowledge base on effective leadership support, development and training. There is, however, a danger in developing a one size fits all programme. As Holligan et al., (1996) conclude – whatever programme is developed, this programme must retain the most positive elements of the currently established leadership development programmes whilst still remaining flexible, individual, both generic and specific – this is no easy task.

5.8 Theme 2.2 NPQH perceived as a less positive experience.

However, whilst just over 50% (n=11) of the respondents found NPQH beneficial, just fewer than 50 % (n=9) reported NPQH as a far less positive experience. Where respondents felt that NPQH was a less positive experience than other interviewees, the criticism of the programme was evident from their response to a question about their perceptions of the role of NPQH in their preparation for headship. Illustrative responses demonstrate the depth of negative feelings about the programme:

‘I’m not convinced that I learnt a great deal from it really. The school-based assessment took a ridiculous amount of time because it was sorting all the different bits of evidence you had to prepare. I don’t know what it showed about my leadership skills apart from I can organise lots of bits of paper, do you know what I mean?’ (head teacher 5)

head teacher 14 discussed:

‘Sometimes I think they (course facilitators or assessors) are looking for you to say a certain thing for your answer. It’s almost like they don’t actually want to listen to what you have got to say, I don’t feel that there is much flexibility really. I went on the community cohesion day, the lecturer or person more or less admitted in the end he did the same thing with every group that he got.’ (head teacher 14)

These illustrative quotes resonate strongly within the literature reviewing the effectiveness of NPQH. The criticisms, made here by the respondents and from the literature, seem centred around the lack of personalisation, inability to deviate from a given script of the planned programme, poor quality training providers and lengthy time taken to assimilate and gather evidence toward assessments. Certainly these criticisms are supported by the literature too, Ribbins (1997) and Gunter (1999, 2005) have questioned whether what in their view is a generic model underpinning the NPQH or other leadership programmes can cater for the complexity and changing leadership face of headship. That said, the NCSL has been quick to respond to criticisms of the NPQH (Brundrett, 2006) and indeed have adapted the leadership learning models that underpin the programme. A more recent review from 2011, Crawford and Earley reported preliminary positive findings of the revised NPQH. The role of NPQH in preparing for headship is unclear. It would appear that strong evidence exists to support NPQH as a positive experience, on the other hand, equally strong evidence exists to suggest the opposite. The respondents here would support this claim with almost a 50/50 split in positive views to negative. It is perhaps easier to speculate on the intention of NPQH or equivalent leadership programmes; the intention is clearly to develop and support

aspiring senior leaders. Furthermore, from reviews previously cited, it would appear that NCSL and indeed international leadership centres continue to look to ensure that the programmes offered meet the needs of aspiring head teachers and indeed changes itself to keep pace with educational policy, politics and practice. This in itself is no easy task, and it could be argued that the programme administrators and designers are constantly in a state of flux, forced in some way to play 'catch up' with the ever-changing demands of the educational landscape. Many researchers call for further study, greater analysis or indeed make the valid point that there is limited empirical evidence of the true and statistically valid effectiveness of the leadership development programmes on leadership effectiveness itself and pupil outcomes. What is clear from the literature is that there is a growing sense of the effectiveness of programmes like NPQH, if nothing else from the perceptions of the course participants themselves who cite their feelings about their own preparedness for headship as enhanced, directly as a result of NPQH. However, it is also clear that, for the many positive perceptions of NPQH, there are equal numbers of negative perceptions. Whatever the future for leadership development programmes, it is important that the content, structure and organisation remains relevant, up to date and is fit for purpose for the sake of the financial and personal investment of time for the participants and the successful development of future leaders.

5.9 Theme 2.3 Affirmation of readiness – Self-belief - aspiring head teachers felt prepared to apply for headship positions after significant leadership experiences.

All of the respondents recounted feeling ready to apply for headship after significant and very different leadership experiences. For most (n=14), this readiness to apply came about as a result of the direct leadership experiences gained as Deputy head teachers. Of this

group (n=14), all described the supportive network of staff around them but all spoke particularly of the support given by their own head teacher.

‘Affirmation of readiness’ is a term that I define as the feeling of being ready to apply for and begin the post of head teacher. From the respondents here it appears inexorably linked to self-belief. That, however, is not the only factor and, importantly, having their inherent abilities recognised and affirmed by someone of whom the aspirant leader holds in leadership high regard appears to be of some significance. This affirmation may come through effective use of coaching and mentoring. Illustrative comments that help explain this definition:

As head teacher 12 recalled:

‘I think for me it was (the head) having faith. I just thought, ‘she’s made that commitment to me. I wasn’t going to let her down come what may. So I think it was her belief in me – yes you can do it. It was sort of, as I did each phase that gave me confidence to step for the next one.’ (head teacher 12)

As head teacher 2 discussed:

‘The head of the LA came down, he doesn’t just turn up does he? He said, ‘ Well what you are doing is brilliant but one of you has got to go. (Conversation to HT and DHT) So your succession planning’s sorted. That was the final okay. Okay if X LA has faith in me then let’s go with them (for headships), let’s see what’s out there.’ (head teacher 2)

Similarly head teacher 1 described:

‘Because the head was out so frequently and I got to make a lot of decisions and do a lot of the everyday running of the school, you start thinking, well actually I can do this.’ (head teacher 1)

Self-perception of ‘readiness for leadership’ is linked to the notion of self-belief and the importance of self-belief in aspirant (or in-post leaders) is discussed further in Rhodes’ (2012a) paper where he argues that self-belief plays a part identify transformation and

enactment of leadership. As Rhodes argues, the understanding of self-belief and its role in leadership enactment remains unclear and more work is needed in this area. However this emergent characteristic, based upon this research, suggests a strong link in leadership transformation and supports its integration into current theoretical frameworks for leadership identity and transformation.

It would appear that validation of skills through recognition 'in-the field or on the job' further supports the feeling of readiness and growing self-belief. In Rhodes and Fletcher's (2013) paper they report a number of studies (Veenman et al, 2001; Quinn et al, 2006; Margolis, 2005) where coaching is suggested to impact and support leadership development, persistence and self-efficacy in potential leaders.

As Goleman et al., (2002) define:

'A good coach communicates a belief in people's potentials and an expectation that they can do their best. The tacit message is, 'I believe in you, I'm investing in you, and I expect your best efforts'. As a result, people sense that the leader cares, so they feel motivated to uphold their own high standards of performance, and they feel accountable for how well they do.' (Goleman et al., 2002: pp. 62)

However, coaching itself is not without criticism and as Rhodes and Fletcher (2013), Kilburg (2007) and Bullough and Draper (2004) all note some of the potential dangers of coaching. These dangers are in terms of costs, training, power relationships, emotional support for coach and coachee, successful pairing of coach to coachee that may all have a negative effect on the success of such a programme to support self-belief. Self-efficacy has previously been defined; it is worth identifying the place of self-belief in models of leadership development within the literature review.

For these respondents, the building of their self-belief and 'affirmation' of their skills was an important catalyst in making the leap to apply for and become successful in gaining their first headship. However, I would argue that this self-belief is important right from the identification of potential leadership talent and indeed begins to build when these fledgling leaders first take on or become responsible for some aspect of school improvement to develop one or more aspects of school provision. Personal capacity and self-belief are linked, and I would argue that these two aspects support the self-realisation, catalysed by concrete experiences, of a leader's readiness to assume the role of principal or head teacher. I would go further to suggest that there is a cyclical nature to the building of these aspects that begins from the first leadership responsibilities right through to headship and beyond. Indeed I would argue that, the notion of personal capacity and self-belief have a more important role than currently recognised within the literature at layered points in a leader's career. There is no shortage of opportunity for leaders to develop these skills and foster self-belief, the UK Government White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (DFE, 2011) contains eighty-one pages of text, seventy five of these pages contain some reference to a change for Government or departmental policy and ultimately schools. 2011 is not unique, and schools are well used to the pressures of National Government to change policy and practice. The building and development of self-belief and personal capacity come from a wide, varied, structured programme of career leadership development opportunities, Earley (2008, 2009), Centre for Organisational Research (2001), NCSL (2011), SREB (2005, 2012). Within a supportive structure of leadership development opportunities, this provides aspirant leaders with the opportunity to develop their leadership capacity, personal capacity and ultimately self-belief by bringing about change to some aspect of school provision. There is a well-

established literature base on change and change management, and there are links between these aspects and leadership capacity development. It is in an aspirant leader's formative professional years that they will gain experience of bringing about change and all of the leadership skills that this involves, building their self-belief and personal capacity.

Change and change management has a long established research base, many agree (Stoll and Fink, 1996; Wallace, 2003; Fullan, 2002; Lumby and Foskett, 2008) that leadership, leadership capacity and succession planning are key to sustained change and system improvement. As Fullan (2002) states:

'The organisation cannot flourish (or at least not for long) by the actions of the top leaders alone.' (Fullan, 2002, p.11)

He is adamant that a spread of leaders, at many levels, is needed to deal with and manage successfully change and continuing change. The importance of leadership in bringing about effective change is argued by Mujis and Harris (2003); many researchers' argue the importance of middle leaders in bringing about change and ensuring its effectiveness (Gunter, 2001; Glover et al. 1998; Busher and Harris, 1999). This group of Middle Managers, responsible for teams or whole school co-ordination of an aspect or area represents a sharing of leadership across an educational institution.

Southworth (2002) states there is much more talk about shared leadership, leadership teams and distributed leadership than ever before.

The growth of the term shared or distributed leadership is noted by Gunter and Ribbins (2003, p. 132) and others (Gronn, 2000; Harris 2004; Spillane et al., 2001).

Reflecting upon the path to headship of the respondents interviewed here and the backdrop to the leadership succession models, it may be argued that these leaders developed two key

aspects of their skills and attributes to support their headship aspirations. Firstly, the skills to bring about effective change and as a by-product of this effective change, greater self-belief in their own skills and attributes leading to an affirmation of readiness for headship. Some of this is supported by early career stages of Gronn, Ribbins, Day and Bakioglu, Earley and Weindling – the Accession stage, testing out their leadership skills; developing further opportunities to demonstrate their skills. Furthermore, it may be argued ‘change management’ is a fundamental skill that needs early development to mastery for a number of important reasons. Firstly, as already cited, the importance of effective school change and its links to effective leadership are well established. Making changes, and making changes well appears important for the longevity and ability of schools to stay fresh and up to date. Secondly, by effectively leading, managing and bringing about effective change, it is likely that the aspirant leaders may work with a range of stakeholders. Successful or otherwise change management may well increase aspiring leaders’ own self-belief in their skill set. Browne-Ferrigno’s (2003) model of transformative leadership may work alongside an implanted model of change management leading to the development of self-belief, this idea will be conceptualised further in this work (see figure 7). It appears that effective leadership task completion, with appropriate feedback from a more senior coach and/or mentor is an effective combination of developing and recognising self-belief. Furthermore, it would appear from these respondents that, without sufficient self-belief, headship succession might not be as successful as it needs to be. It may be that without sufficient self-belief that succession to a headship may fail. These ideas will be developed further under research question three where the role of pre-headship apprenticeship will be explored to further develop the concept of self-belief. Despite feeling ready for headship,

when asked to reflect upon their perceptions of readiness, the reality of the job affected the respondents' perceptions of their readiness.

5.10 Theme 2.4 – Ready or not? – The reality of the job.

Despite the considerable leadership experience of the respondents, after reflecting upon the challenges of early headship, perceptions range from unprepared to very prepared. Many (n=11) felt unprepared for the challenges of early headship; few (n=4) felt relatively prepared; very few (n=3) felt well prepared.

As head teacher 17 described:

‘I thought I was prepared, but then the reality is something quite different. As much as I knew and had experienced the bits, it’s [pause] I didn’t realise. I don’t know – how prepared was I? Probably not very much at all but I got through it somehow.’
(head teacher 17)

A number of studies report on the challenges of early headship, NCSL, Hobson et al., (2002), Bright and Ware (2003), Holligan et al., (2006), Weindling and Dimmock (2006). Loneliness, dealing with a legacy, isolation. What emerges from these papers is that leaders are now more prepared than ever for the challenges of leadership; this is a growing field of research. However, as Weindling and Dimmock (2006) point out, many of the challenges facing head teachers now are the same as 20 years ago and as Leithwood et al., (1999) points out each school’s context plays an important role in shaping the challenges of each headship. The papers cited support the view that role socialisation, acclimatisation and conceptualisation, ‘on the job’ `about the role itself provides the most effective training for the role. With the backdrop of that in mind, three quarters of the respondents felt unprepared or relatively prepared for the role. The research suggests that the challenges today are not dis-similar to

those identified twenty years ago. Already cited work on leadership development programmes and their refinement show strong evidence that these programmes are now, more so than ever, more closely match to the needs to aspirant leaders. Yet with all this in place, 75% of these respondents did not feel fully prepared for the challenges of their headship. It may be that the time frame of these respondents leadership development was such that the programmes they experienced at that time were not as finely tuned as more recent iterations. It may be that the leadership experiences they had were not in sufficient depth or personal capacity was not sufficiently developed to support their transition. One further possibility is that the context that their 'training ground' school or schools was so dissimilar to their headship school that the knowledge and skills were not sufficiently transferrable to support them during their early headship. As head teacher 2 described, relating directly to school context:

'I was prepared in terms of the opportunities and the skills that X provided for me (at previous school in role as DHT) but I wasn't prepared for the fact that the school wasn't what I thought it was. I found out what it was really like and not what everybody said it was like. We were a little bubble here and to have to scrape it back from the bottom it was just not what I expected. I didn't want to be here at all.'
(head teacher 2).

Another theme emerging from this research that shows some agreement with the literature is with regard to Holligan et al., (2006) work on the 'missing pieces' in headship preparation. Holligan's review of 357 head teachers suggested that collaboration; school improvement; training; standards and achievement; social inclusion; financial matters; time-management; and leadership all formed part of their needs.

head teacher 16 recounted:

‘[Qu: On reflection, how prepared were you for your early headship?] Not at all, not at all. The first day as head, for I’d say three years my learning curve was like that (motioning upwards in a steep 80 degree incline). Every day I’d think what’s that? Who’s phoned? Who are they? There were so many things that were nothing to do with my degree, the teaching, NPQH, that it was such a steep learning curve every single day. It was quite scary.’ (head teacher 16)

This theme of missing elements in leadership preparation will be returned to within the section on Research question 3 where a theme emerging from the research is concerned with the wider role of the head teacher and links to the respondents comments and, among others, Holligan et al., (2006) review.

5.11 Summary of the discussion of the research question 2. ‘On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?’

Four themes emerged under this broad research question, the role of NPQH in leadership development positively and negatively; affirmation of readiness and the importance of self-belief; how prepared in reality the respondents were for the challenges of their headship.

Respondents were split on the effectiveness of NPQH to support leadership accession and early incumbency; it appears that leadership development programmes are becoming more effective. However, where these programmes exist, the challenge to produce and keep up to date, a leadership development programme that meets the needs of all aspirant leaders is a tall order and one that is not yet secure. From my research findings, I would hypothesise that a structured leadership development programme, spanning a career from early talent spotting, may support the needs of aspiring leaders better than the current separate programmes. The possibility for international collaboration to share the growing research base and knowledge pool may further support the development of these programmes.

The importance of self-belief and affirmation of the skill set that potential leaders have mastered seems to play an important part in leadership careers. This hypothesis supports and develops current established models of leadership development by inserting self-belief and affirmation of readiness into the models currently accepted. It appears that self-belief is grown, nurtured, developed and built around successfully managing change and making improvements to school provision; the feedback gained from senior leaders on performance cements and adds to the aspirant leaders' growing sense of self-belief. Without this sense of personal capacity and self-belief, this research suggests that many respondents would not have made the transition to and transformation into a principal or head teacher.

Despite the depth and range of experiences gained by aspiring head teachers, three quarters of the respondents felt less than prepared for the actuality of the role of head teacher. It would appear that some of the gaps in knowledge are as a result of an individual school contexts that the aspiring leaders found themselves in as newly incumbent leaders. It appears that there is some resonance with previous research into the needs of newly appointed head teachers and the wider role of head teacher that may not be fully understood by newly incumbent leaders. This idea will be returned to within research question 3.

5.12 RQ 3 -Summary findings research question 3. 'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?'

For this group of respondents, the most common themes were grouped together, as identified through the thematic text analysis of responses. Few responses (n=3) shared

themes that had few similarities with other responses and whilst valid and important, individual responses that did not share common themes were not presented within the findings.

Five themes represent the most common responses to this research question. Most of the respondents (n=17) discussed the importance of their head teacher, prior to the respondents succeeding to headship themselves, in their preparation and success in early headship. This role varied for respondents but appeared to promote, and allow and encourage a range of leadership opportunities for the then aspiring head teachers. This range of experiences has been drawn upon to support the respondents in their early careers as head teachers themselves. Leadership within a supportive framework of no blame and coaching and mentoring has, in the perception of these respondents supported them in the transition to and experience of early headship. For the respondents, the ultimate responsibility and understanding of the wider role of head teachers has been one of the most common perceptions of the challenges of early headship.

5.13 Themes 3.1, 3.2 and 3.5 – Leadership Apprenticeship, freedom to experiment and the wider role of head teachers.

Of these (n=17) respondents, they all very strongly discussed the role of coaching and mentoring within their early headship. This group described the role of coach and mentor in their responses; it was clear that this group linked their early headship survival to the role of coaching and mentoring. The respondents may not have discussed an individual mentor, rather a supportive group or network; nevertheless the outcome was the same be it

individual, group or network. The respondents' views are summarised well by the illustrative quotes below.

head teacher 1 discussed:

'Make sure you have a supportive network around you. When you come into a new situation, you really want somebody who understands things, that some things aren't easy, some things are quite challenging. I want to talk to somebody who can help me and help me solve things and help me think things through. I was looking for a coach rather than a mentor.' (head teacher 1)

As head teacher 2 described:

'The apprenticeship with X. She involved me with everything budget setting, difficult conversations, pupil progress, data, health and safety. It was really good in terms of X and my experiences there, if I could be a X for my Deputy or even a Y for my TLR's then I think I am doing what people did for me' (head teacher 2)

The notion of leadership apprentice programmes is not unique to England. Earley (2009), NCSL (2011) in England make reference to them and their role in leadership development; Reeves et al., (2010) in Scotland; SREB (2005, 2012) in the US. Apprenticeships are not new and have been used within the manufacturing industry for well over a century to develop the skills of the different workforces to mastery level. What is more recently unique is the growth in the importance placed on these apprenticeship style placements on leadership development and their use within the education sector. One of the most common responses throughout this research within research question three was the response of the value placed on working with an experienced colleague. Whilst all of the respondents may not have used the same terminology, it was clear from the transcripts that the process of support they felt, on reflection, helped to survive their early days of headship was indeed their leadership apprenticeship. Interconnected to this leadership apprenticeship and its

relative success or failure is the use of an experienced coach/mentor. Intern or apprenticeship style learning placements are not without criticism and Crawford and Earley (2011) discuss the barriers to effective placements notably through the variability of the settings and the skills of the staff charged with serving as master to the apprentice. Supported by the literature and this research, it would appear that there are three determining factors that result in the effectiveness or otherwise of the leadership learning that takes place as a result of these internship/apprenticeship style placements. The factors appear to be related to the context surrounding the placement itself, the skills of a mentor within the placement and the reflexivity of the participants.

From this research, respondents talked with great pride, affection and sense of personal self-belief at the role of their own head teacher in their leadership style apprenticeship. It is worth noting that none of the respondents experienced a planned programme with a placement outside of their own institution; for these respondents this was not part of their formal or informal leadership induction. It may be that at the point in time before their accession to headship that the importance of this professional development was less well understood and did not form part of the respondents' preparation for headship.

Nevertheless, through either conscious or unconscious means, the incumbent's head teachers, for (n=17) of the respondents engineered a range of leadership style apprenticeship activities or experiences. For each of the seventeen respondents, their perceptions of this preparation were seen as effective in supporting their early headship experiences. This is supported by the literature where NCSL's review of the experiences of new Heads in cities, among other things, concluded:

'New heads in the study felt that they had benefited most from a wealth of

experience in assistant and deputy headship roles and referred to the benefits of working with heads who had been concerned with their professional and career development. Experience under heads who have seen it as part of their role to develop the deputy for headship by giving them stretching tasks and sharing responsibilities was very important.’ (NCSL, 2011: p.5)

Similarly the view of the SREB (2012) in the Southern United States supports the importance of these programmes for developing principals. It would appear that the extent of the apprenticeship is in some way linked to perceptions of effectiveness during early headship. Despite the positive perceptions of this element of the respondents’ preparation for headship, many (as already discussed) did not feel wholly prepared for the challenges of their headship.

It may be that contextually, the placement itself affects the effectiveness, depth and range of the leadership learning that takes places. Certainly, the literature would support the assertion that the quality; training and commitment of the Heads and senior teams within the placement institution is critical in securing effectiveness or otherwise of the programmes, Crawford and Earley (2011); Leithwood et al., (1999). It would appear that the contextual feature of the placement relating to where the host school is positioned on its own development pathway is important. If the host placement is too well developed then this can result in a reduction of learning for the apprentice. On the other hand, should a host placement not be developed enough then there is a danger of learning becoming fragmented by ‘fire-fighting’ issues within the institution without sufficient strategic direction and development to be useful to the apprentice. Additionally, the training and understanding of the senior staff involved has a bearing for good or ill upon the placement’s effectiveness and the issues of power, training, skills set, personality matching are all discussed by Rhodes (2012b) and Stead (2006).

For the respondents, the issues of context and personality matching did not impact; it was indeed their own schools where these 'placements' took place. There are implications here for future research to establish more fully the characteristics of the placements available for apprenticeships and the role of context in mitigating loss to leadership learning. Establishing the characteristics of an effective placement is in itself no easy task. The context facing individual schools are disparate and varied, there may be some argument that one placement is insufficient in meeting the leadership development needs of aspirant leaders, for example, a range of apprentice style placements in different socio-economic areas would provide a fuller picture of the potential challenges in early headship. Few (n=7) of the respondents, this apprenticeship provided them with a safe environment for the aspiring leaders to manage and lead on school issues without the ultimate responsibility of being the head teacher. The freedom to lead and take risks but with the knowledge that the climate was right, mistakes could be made without anything other than professional learning retribution. This freedom to lead and takes risks, to the respondents, was a supportive atmosphere where the roles of head and Deputy were almost interchangeable; a training ground for headship without the ultimate responsibility. This climate, support and leadership practice – thinking as the head teacher might – supported this group in their leadership growth. As head teacher 7 described:

'Well as an incident happened, she (head teacher) would ask me, 'Why – put your head hat on, what would you do about that?' I would sit there and answer whatever I thought was appropriate, and then she would give me advice and tell me what she thought she would do' (head teacher 7)

Additionally, there appears a further implication for future research into the necessary core skills of senior leaders on placement schools. Notably to ensure that these leaders of

placement schools have the necessary coaching and mentoring abilities to successfully maximise the leadership learning potential of these seemingly important but also expensive apprentice placements. As already discussed, the use of coaching and mentoring to develop leaders of the future appears to play an important role in the aspirant leaders conception of, transformation to and role socialization of headship. It has been argued that the placement staff need the skills and attributes to be successful coaches, I would argue that the apprentices themselves needs to develop sufficient reflexivity on their performance to ensure maximum personal leadership growth. It has been argued earlier that self-belief and self-efficacy hold an important role in developing the confidence and inner-belief of the skills needed to survive and be successful in early headship. The role of coaching and mentoring has some strong bearing on the apprentice's abilities to reflect and internalise their performance in self-belief building tasks and experiences so that maximum personal and professional growth takes place. In the NCSL's paper from 2005 entitled Leading Coaching in Schools, they set out a National Framework for Coaching and add:

'Effective coaching is dependent on the learner's willingness to be open and honest and to put their plans into action. The National Framework sets out the requirements for learners as well as coaches. Key responsibilities for learners include: understanding their own learning needs; reflecting on their own practice; taking an increasingly active role in their own learning; acting on what is learned to improve pupil learning.' (NCSL, 2005: pp. 13)

Already discussed leadership development models may well benefit from the integration of Apprenticeship style placements, linked to supporting the increased self-belief of aspirant leaders. Self-belief through apprenticeship may well sit alongside the Browne-Ferrigno (2003) model of leadership transformation and further support aspirant leaders in their journey to headship.

The role of the leadership apprenticeship appears to support aspiring leaders in reducing their perceptions of the challenges of early headship. Weindling and Dimmock (2006), Holligan et al., (2006), Hobson et al., (2002), Bright and Ware (2003) all report upon the challenges facing head teachers. Holligan et al., (2006) analysed data from 357 head teachers about their needs, there is alignment in the findings of all of the cited papers. There is some alignment with the research findings presented here. Half of the respondents expressed a general lack of understanding of the wider role of the head teacher. As head teachers 4, 10 and 14 discussed.

‘I think as well, it’s not until you actually do the job that you realise just how varied a role it actually is. You’d hear the head before talk about this, that and this and budget, budget and you’re thinking but it’s health and safety, asbestos, child protection it’s everything isn’t it? You’re spinning plates and juggling balls constantly.’ (head teacher 4)

Similarly

‘I wouldn’t necessarily see the whole range of what the head’s job was. So I’d be coming at it from a teaching and learning hat. It’s only since the job, looking at obviously staffing, finance, buildings and all the other stuff that goes on that I’d had no experience of before that.’ (head teacher 10)

Additionally

‘I would have spent more time as a Deputy learning about the finance side of managing a school and the health and safety side of running a school. Because those are the two things that are thrown at you aren’t they? When you become the head because really before that you don’t have much experience of it do you?’ (head teacher 14)

There is a strong correlation with the respondents comments and the work of the cited authors; resonating with the comments above, the authors cited found that gaps in knowledge of incumbent head teachers centred around: Selecting and interviewing staff including non-teaching; Grounds / building maintenance; Staff interviews relating to

capability procedures; Personnel issues e.g. directed time issues, exact roles of threshold and management point; Managing the plethora of initiatives; LIG [Leadership Incentive Grant]; Workforce Reform; Threshold; recruitment / retention; Handling the paperwork; Disability Rights Act / inclusion; Health and safety.

I have previously argued that a range of school based apprentice style placements, in a variety of contextually different schools may well support future aspiring leaders to plug their potential knowledge gaps and support their successful role socialisation of the demanding role that is that of the head teacher.

5.14 Theme 3.3 and 3.4 – Coping with responsibility; Understanding the contextual factors of the role appointed to.

‘The responsibility. I lie awake at night worrying about security and me and responsibility. If this place goes under... That’s a massive cross to bear. I got £50 more in my pay packet a month from going from Deputy to head here because I was going from two forms of entry to one. So for the money you wouldn’t do it. It was about the stepping stone in terms of headship, but it’s definitely the responsibility; the buck stops with me and that’s quite scary.’ (head teacher 2)

Some (n=9) of the respondents found the responsibility of being the head teacher a significant challenge of their early headship.

‘Don’t take it personally. Take a step back, find time to reflect. I found that very difficult. I think to a new head coming in, try and build time in. It means you can take a step back and look at what’s happening from a distance really. You have to get things in perspective a little bit more, other wise you wouldn’t cope, would you, with the everyday pressures of headship.’ (head teacher 4)

It would appear that the feelings of ultimate responsibility lie within the leadership development models presented and previously discussed. Role conceptualisation and growing identity all appear to widen the view of these newly incumbent head teachers in

feeling that it is they and they alone who are responsible for the school and all aspects of provision. Rhodes and Fletcher's (2013) work on building self-efficacy may be of interest here whereby, as they argue, the use of other experienced colleagues may help in role conceptualisation through the use of their '3 'a' s'. This would support a modification of the Browne-Ferrigno (2003) model of leadership development by the insertion of these characteristics through the use of coaching and mentoring. Whilst this may be true in terms of the job description, as has already been discussed – the range and depth of other senior leaders, middle managers and the Governing body all combine in reality to share the burden of responsibility. I have established the role that coaching and mentoring can make in helping to reduce and manage these feelings of loneliness, isolation and responsibility. Nevertheless, the perceptions of these respondents are clear, and there may be implications for future research in identifying specific experiences, activities or other supportive mechanisms that can help incumbent head teachers manage these feelings and lessen the burden of their early careers.

Few (n=7) of the respondents expressed the difficulty that the actuality of the role they faced school specific contexts, compared to the challenges that thought they might face.

' I don't think I was under any illusions about the role of head teacher because I was doing it at X for the acting headship. However I'd found a school that wasn't in the place I thought it was, not knowing the school had not been accurately sold to me' (head teacher 2)

I have already established the growing difficulty in successfully recruiting to headship posts. It may be that the employing body, LA, Diocese or Academy Sponsor may choose to portray the school development needs as positively as they can. After all, recruitment appears problematic at best, and full disclosure of school improvement issues may well further

reduce the field of candidates available. As Holligan et al., (2006) discusses, individual school context makes up a proportion of the leadership needs within that institution. Aspiring leaders may well be wary of the accuracy of the application pack in portraying the number and quantity of positive aspects present in the schools they are aspiring to lead. It is not clear from the literature or this research how the issues of individual school context can affect and influence potential candidate's decision to apply for headship posts. There may be implications here for future research into a school context and the impact on early headship.

5.15 Summary of the discussion of Research question 3. 'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?'

Five themes emerged under this research question that were then grouped into two broader areas for discussion, the role of pre-headship apprenticeship style placements that supported self-belief and understanding of the role of the head teacher and the challenges facing incumbent leaders as a result of responsibility and individual school contexts.

It appears that the use of apprenticeship style leadership development placements may well have an important place in developing a number of key aspects that affect the success or otherwise of incumbent leaders' first headship position. Firstly, the range of leadership experiences in contextually different settings supports the aspiring leaders growth in self-belief and self-efficacy that in turn may support successful headship incumbency. There is agreement with established models of leadership development and the ideas proposed sit alongside the already established models to support leadership development in the future.

Secondly the growth in aspirant leaders knowledge of the wider role of the head teacher and the freedom to experiment with leadership activities may well help reduce the burden of early headship incumbents. This growth may well support acceleration in their role socialisation and mastery of skills however, this is partially dependent upon the core skills of the host school's leadership team being sufficient to maximise leadership learning,

The individual school context of the post that incumbent Heads find themselves appointed to may well affect the leadership choices that these newly in-post Heads face. Context, along with recognition of the sole responsibility of the post appears to be an important challenge for these respondents. There is some agreement with cited work on the challenges of responsibility and the role of distributed leadership and coaching and mentoring may well support this aspect of early leadership challenge. There appears little in the literature regarding the challenges of different schools based upon their individual contexts; it is proposed that employers may be choosing to sell their institution to the full effect in light of the leadership crisis.

5.16 Overall summary of main findings.

This research has yielded a number of key ideas or themes that make a contribution to the knowledge base of leadership development based upon the responses of twenty head teachers within their first five years of headship. The main ideas or themes emerging are:

- Intrinsic motivation making a contribution to personal capacity.
- Personal capacity adding to the 'staying power' of aspiring leaders and the insertion of this idea into accepted leadership development frameworks.

- The importance of talent spotting early in an aspiring leader's career, by incumbent leaders, and the role of the incumbent leader as a coach and/or mentor.
- The role of career-coaching in leadership development, role identity transformation and the insertion of this idea into accepted leadership development frameworks.
- Affirmation of readiness for headship and the importance of self-belief/personal capacity on this readiness and the insertion of this idea into accepted leadership development frameworks.
- The role of leadership for learning; apprentice style work placements on developing capacity and self-belief.
- Overcoming or managing the Individual school context to which a leader finds themselves appointed to and so ensuring leadership success.

The final chapter seeks to form conclusions based upon the research findings, reviewed literature and discussion chapter. An amended model of leadership development will be presented, based upon the well-established Browne-Ferrigno (2003) model as an alternative to support aspiring leaders in their journey to and success in early headship along with a new notion of personal capacity and an amended model of factors affecting the transition to headship. The conclusions will be presented following the order of the discussion chapter and seek to identify the contribution to knowledge along with implications for practice, leadership, policy, training and the research agenda. Finally suggested recommendations and areas for further work as a result of this research.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction.

The final chapter seeks to form conclusions based upon the research findings, reviewed literature and discussion chapter. The conclusions will be presented following the order of the discussion chapter and seek to identify the contribution to knowledge centred around a new conceptualisation of the Browne-Ferrigno (2003) leadership transformation model and a new notion of personal capacity and its role in leadership transition. This chapter will also identify implications for practice, leadership, policy, training and the research agenda.

Finally suggested recommendations and areas for further work, as a result of this research, will be presented.

This research has yielded a number of key ideas or themes that make a contribution to the knowledge base of leadership development based upon the responses of twenty head teachers within their first five years of headship. The main ideas or themes emerging are:

- Intrinsic motivation making a contribution to personal capacity.
- Personal capacity adding to the 'staying power' of aspiring leaders and the insertion of this idea into accepted leadership development frameworks.
- The importance of talent spotting early in an aspiring leader's career, by incumbent leaders, and the role of the incumbent leader as a coach and/or mentor.

- The role of career-coaching in leadership development, role identity transformation and the insertion of this idea into accepted leadership development frameworks.
- Affirmation of readiness for headship and the importance of self-belief/personal capacity on this readiness and the insertion of this idea into accepted leadership development frameworks.
- The role of leadership for learning; apprentice style work placements on developing capacity and self-belief.
- Overcoming or managing the Individual school context to which a leader finds themselves appointed to and so ensuring leadership success.

To ensure full reporting and a true representation of this research, all of the findings and the contribution to knowledge are presented here. However whilst all of the findings make a contribution to knowledge and add to the current literature base, some are more substantive than others. To illustrate this point, I will contrast two of the findings to emphasise the difference in the contributions made. Within research question one, coaching and mentoring emerges as a strong theme from respondents. Coaching and mentoring in itself does not represent a new contribution to knowledge and the current literature critiqued recognises the importance of coaching and mentoring to bring about personal and professional leadership growth. Where there is a contribution to knowledge is in the insertion of coaching and mentoring into the leadership models discussed. Within research question two, I propose the new notion of 'personal capacity' and its role in leadership transition/transformation. In this context, the notion of

personal capacity appears much less frequently in the literature and represents an important new conceptualisation of this aspect. This new notion of personal capacity represents a new concept and a new addition to the literature and stands slightly separate to the other findings making a contribution to knowledge. The conclusions are reported by research question.

6.2 Research question 1. 'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?'

The contribution to knowledge emerging within this research question:

The contribution to knowledge emerging through this research question centres around four key ideas. Firstly the role of intrinsic motivation making a contribution to personal capacity; second the notion of personal capacity adding to the 'staying power' of aspiring leaders and the insertion of this idea into accepted leadership development frameworks; thirdly the importance of talent spotting early in an aspiring leader's career, by incumbent leaders, and the role of the incumbent leader as a coach and/or mentor and finally the role of career-coaching in leadership development, role identity transformation and the insertion of this idea into accepted leadership development frameworks.

Respondents' motivations to teach may have an impact upon their choice of teaching as a career path and this in turn has an impact upon their future leadership careers. The impact of intrinsic motivation to teach appears to play some part in developing a sense of personal capacity. I defined personal capacity as making a contribution to overcoming the challenges faced at all stages of leadership career development, but notably here, within the early years of headship. This notion of personal capacity appears to help during early career survival and

further plays a part in later leadership development by adding to the 'staying power' of aspiring leaders. I have argued that this notion of personal capacity supports an amended leadership model of career development, and I propose its injection into the well - established model by Browne-Ferrigno (2003). The importance of a mentor in respondents' induction to and early success as teachers has been important in their journey to headship as this early effective mentoring has allowed the respondents to be identified as an effective teacher. The respondents were identified, rather than self-disclosed and as such this may have important implications for the incumbent leaders of settings. This identification of the respondents as effective teachers, above and separate to other potential leadership characteristics, led to a 'first taste' of leadership opportunities. For these respondents, the leadership opportunities came relatively early within their careers, across the group of respondents, before year three of their teaching lives. These leadership opportunities provided a training ground for leadership development, retention and identification of potential talent pool for the future. Important parallels can be drawn between established leadership development models and the role that coaching and mentoring have played in shaping these, as they were then, leaders of the future in terms of their initial professional identity and beyond. I have argued and, therefore, propose an amendment to the Browne-Ferrigno (2003) model of leadership development is appropriate whereby professional growth has a somewhat cyclical nature in the lives and careers of leaders. That is to say, professional growth starts on appointment as a newly qualified teacher. Dependent upon the route that has been taken to teaching, the (often) familial or professional influences that supported the direction to take up teaching as a profession informs and shapes the early teachers' start to teaching. Importantly, this professional growth needs to continue up to

and beyond appointment to headship. The importance of early career mentorship as identified, from these respondents cannot be underestimated. The climate and culture within the institutions of career support led to these respondents being talent spotted. There is an important distinction between being 'spotted' and self-disclosing. Talent spotting has important implications for leadership development models and the role of incumbent leaders to identify and develop, through career opportunities, these 'spotted' candidates. Adding the role of talent management alongside a framework of coaching and mentoring may well lead to a future pool of potential senior leaders. This idea of talent management supports its insertion into current leadership development frameworks as argued within this chapter, the Browne-Ferrigno (2003) model of leadership transformation. These ideas will be developed and summarised through an amended and proposed model of leadership development (see figure 7, pp. 187).

The amended Browne-Ferrigno (2003) model of leadership development sits within a framework of coaching and mentoring. This research strongly suggests that the role of coaching and mentoring supports each and every stage of career development in terms of retention, career progression and importantly for the models of leadership development discussed within this thesis, the transformation to senior leaders. This has important implications for policy and practice where I argue that established models of coaching and mentoring become requirements of initial teacher training, middle and senior leadership development programmes. Three quarters of the respondent cited the importance of the role of a coach and/or mentor in developing practice and leadership capabilities; this is supported within the literature (Rhodes et al., 2004; Kennedy, 2005; Brundrett and Crawford, 2008; Bush, 2008; Rhodes, 2012b). Professional identity evolves from day one of

a career. It has been established here that that the growth of this professional identity from leadership at an early level right up to, and beyond, appointment to headship supports in the established leadership transformation. I argue that this supports the inclusion of coaching and mentoring into an amended model of leadership development. For the respondents here many (n=15) were 'talent spotted' by their head teachers as having potential leadership skills, often catalysed by their effectiveness as classroom teachers. Three quarters of the respondents did not self-realise nor did they aspire to senior leadership positions. There are important implications for leadership development models, policy and practice of Governing bodies, incumbent leaders, political leaders and researchers in England and internationally. Those responsible for leadership development and head teacher/principal preparation must ensure a sufficient talent pool of prepared leaders of the future exists to fill the void in leadership. Within the literature review it has been established the decline in quality and quantity of applications for headship and the perceptions of the challenge of headship (Howson and Sprigade, 2011; Rhodes, 2012a) I propose that talent identification be inserted into the current leadership development models to support the talent pool for the future (see Figure 7.) I would argue that there is an important role for incumbent leaders to play in the identification of potential talent as one possible solution to the predicted leadership crisis of the future. Some caution must be exercised, however, as the literature on the practice of talent identification within settings would be supported by further research to establish effective, fair and objective identification of potential leaders of the future.

6.3 Summary of the discussion of the research question 2. 'On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?'

The contribution to knowledge emerging within this research question:

- Affirmation of readiness for headship and the importance of self-belief/personal capacity on this readiness and the insertion of this idea into accepted leadership development frameworks (see figure 5).

Four themes emerged under this broad research question, the role of NPQH in leadership development positively and negatively; affirmation of readiness and the importance of self-belief; how prepared in reality the respondents were for the challenges of their headship.

Respondents were split on the effectiveness of NPQH to support leadership accession and early incumbency; it appears that leadership development programmes are becoming more effective. However, in England and internationally, the challenge to produce and keep up to date, leadership development programme that meets the needs of all aspirant leaders is a tall order and one that is not yet secure. From my research findings, I would hypothesise that a structured leadership development programme, spanning a career from early talent spotting, may support the needs of aspiring leaders better than the current separate programmes. Structured leadership development is important to England and wider international educational landscapes where the leadership crisis also exists. This in itself is not without some considerable difficulty in co-ordinating and aligning leadership development programmes. Whilst there is indeed some merit to the leadership development programmes available, the continuum of their effect on leadership preparation notably for headship, appear less secure. Certainly, these respondents' views are mixed as

to the efficacy of NPQH on the preparation for and journey to headship. With half the respondents praising and half criticising the role of NPQH, I would argue that whilst there are strengths to the programme that have been identified within this research, the programme still has significant short-fallings. NPQH and its efficacy in developing and supporting the transition to headship would benefit from additional research so that the percentage of respondents citing NPQH as a significant support for the leadership journey and transformation can only benefit the potential talent pool of the future. The possibility for international collaboration to share the growing research base and knowledge pool may further support the development of these programmes. It is not, however, that a 'one size fits all' model will be applicable, acceptable to nor appropriate for all aspiring leaders more a generic menu of opportunities with very specific leadership opportunities to develop the aspirant leaders' perceptions of readiness.

The importance of self-belief and affirmation of the skill set that potential leaders have mastered seems to play an important part in leadership careers. This hypothesis supports and develops current established models of leadership development by inserting self-belief and affirmation of readiness into the models currently accepted (see Figure 5). It appears that self-belief is grown, nurtured, developed and built around successfully managing change and making improvements to school provision; the feedback gained from senior leaders on performance cements and adds to the aspirant leader's growing sense of self-belief. Without this sense of self-belief the personal capacity of aspirant leaders may well be diminished, this research suggests that many respondents would not have made the transition to and transformation into a principal or head teacher. I argue that this notion of personal capacity is a catalyst in the transition to leadership at all levels and not just senior leadership (see

figures 5 and 6). Self-belief and leadership experiences lead to the notion of Personal capacity. Similarly to self-belief, personal capacity is built through a range of leadership for learning experiences; added to, as previously argued, by intrinsic motivations to teach and supported through effective coaching and mentoring. This notion of personal capacity represents a new contribution to knowledge and can be illustrated by Figure 6 below.

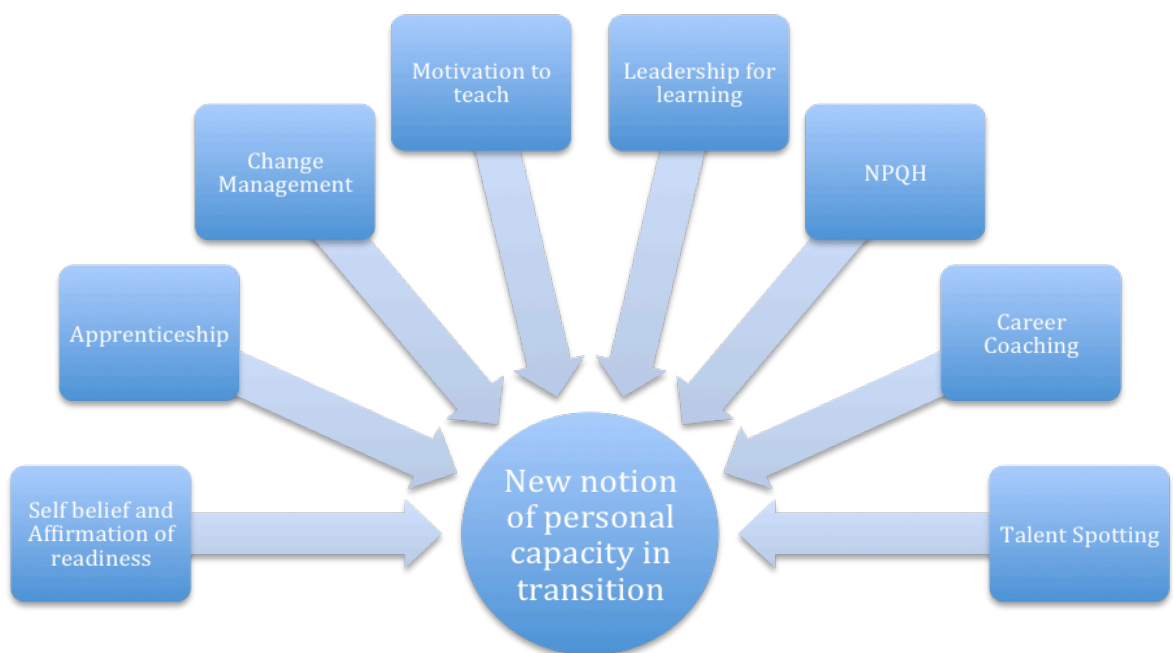


Figure 6 – New Notion of personal capacity in transition to senior leadership.

Personal capacity is linked to the motivation to teach and in some way it is linked to self-belief. In this leadership context, I define personal capacity as the potential for growth, development or accomplishment whereas self-belief is more the confidence in one's self and ability to do things successfully. This research suggests that there are factors that promote and inhibit personal capacity.

Despite the depth and range of experiences gained by aspiring head teachers, three quarters of the respondents felt less than prepared for the actuality of the role of head teacher.

The importance of personal capacity in the route to and perceptions of success in early headship cannot be underestimated. As with self-belief, personal capacity is also built through a structured, supported programme of leadership development opportunities and experiences that along with appropriate coaching and mentoring develops a sense of confidence in the aspirant leaders understanding of their skills and attributes. Personal capacity plays an important role in role identity and transformation to headship. Personal capacity starts at the beginning of the leadership journey and continues after appointment to headship; whereas self-belief plays an important role in affirming in the aspirant leader's mind that they are ready for headship. Personal capacity is almost a measure of the staying power of the aspirant leaders in physically and metaphorically transforming into the senior leader. Not only do the aspirant leaders have to believe they can do the job, supported by the knowledge of successful rehearsals for senior leadership (self-belief); aspirant leaders must also have sufficient drive to overcome the challenges along the way to senior leadership (personal capacity). The two concepts are linked and inter-dependent, I argue that, without sufficient self-belief and personal capacity, the previously argued and established leadership transformation would be unsuccessful. The journey and transformation to headship has previously been argued, supported by the literature, to be challenging and isolating. The addition of the notion of personal capacity and its role in leadership transformation is a new contribution to knowledge that adds to currently accepted models of leadership transformation. As part of this research I have proposed and amended a model of leadership development based on the Browne-Ferrigno (2003) model

that shows these factors acting as a driver/catalyst toward the transformation to senior leadership.

6.4 Summary of the discussion of Research question 3. 'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?'

The contribution to knowledge emerging within this research question:

- The role of leadership for learning; apprentice style work placements on developing capacity and self-belief.
- Overcoming or managing the Individual school context to which a leader finds themselves appointed to and so ensuring leadership success.

Five themes emerged under this research question that were then grouped into two broader areas for discussion. The first of these broader themes centre on the role of pre-headship apprenticeship style placements in supporting the development of self-belief along with a better understanding of the wider role of a head teacher. The second broader theme centres on the challenges facing incumbent leaders as a result of responsibility and individual school contexts.

It appears that the use of apprenticeship style leadership development placements may well have an important place in developing a number of key aspects that affect the success or otherwise of incumbent leaders' first headship position. Firstly, the range of leadership experiences in contextually different settings supports the aspiring leaders growth in self-belief and self-efficacy that in turn may support successful headship incumbency. There is

agreement with established models of leadership development and the ideas proposed sit alongside the already established models to support leadership development in the future. Secondly the growth in aspirant leaders knowledge of the wider role of the head teacher and the freedom to experiment with leadership activities may well help reduce the burden of early headship incumbents by supporting an acceleration in their role socialisation and mastery of skills. I would argue that this could be pictured as a ladder of leadership opportunity that, if successfully built into the culture of the institution, builds leadership learning and so supports the growth in self-belief and personal capacity (see Figure 7 below). If sufficiently embedded within the culture of the institution and the leadership opportunities, growth can be beneficial, however, at the other end of the scale growth can be negative and result in loss of self-belief and erosion of personal capacity.

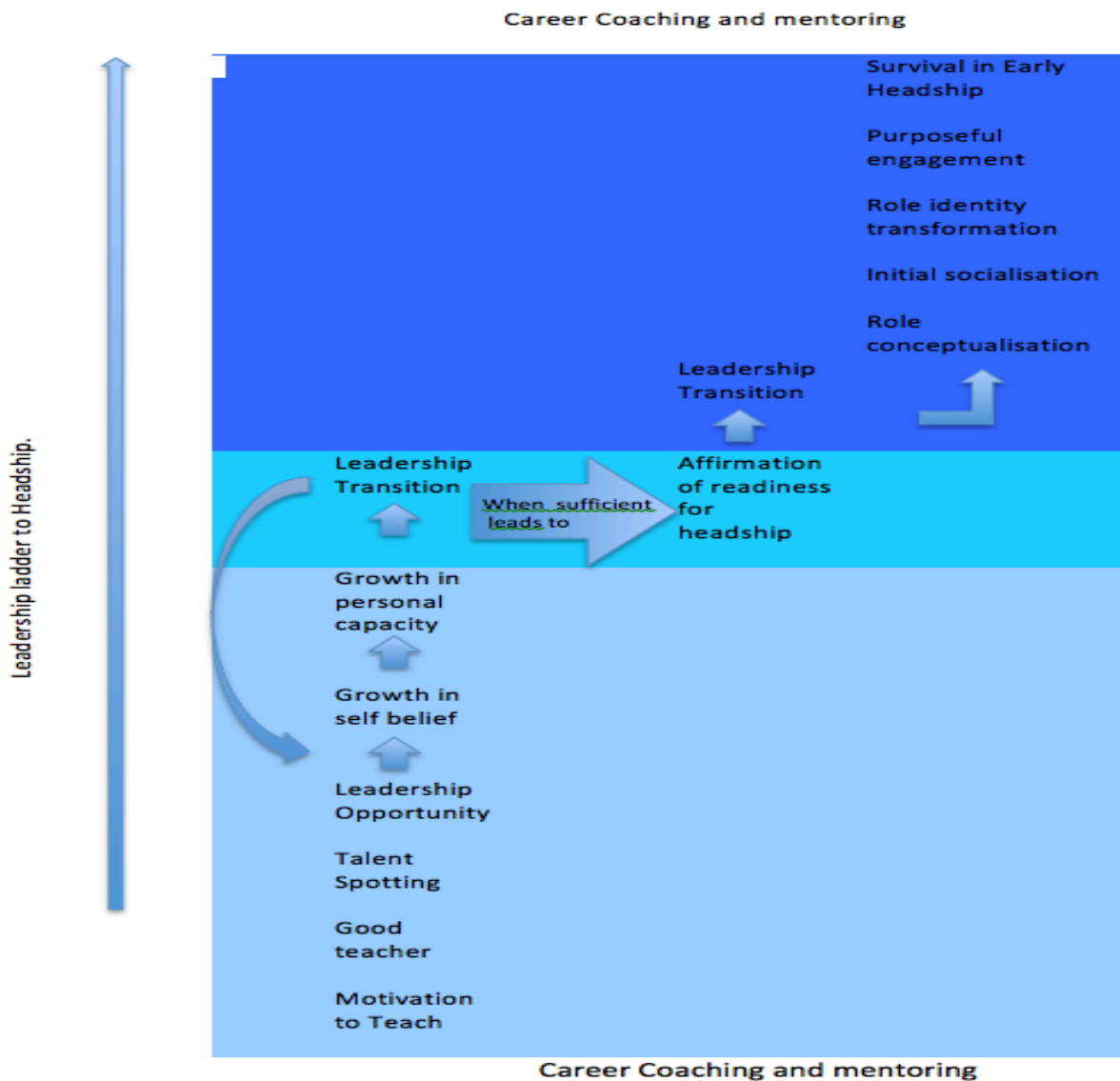


Figure 7. Leadership ladder of transformation

The individual school context of the post that incumbent Heads find themselves appointed to may well affect the leadership choices that these newly in-post Heads face. School context, along with recognition of the sole responsibility of the post appears to be an important challenge for these respondents. There is some agreement with cited work on the challenges of responsibility and the role of distributed leadership and coaching and mentoring may well support this aspect of early leadership challenge. There appears little in

the literature regarding the challenges of different schools based upon their individual contexts; it is proposed that employers may be choosing to sell their institution to the full effect in light of the leadership crisis.

This research invoked the use of a survey methodology using semi-structured interview as a data collection tool. There is no single correct method to employ to undertake any particular research, and this is no exception. As previously argued, the survey methodology is suited to small-scale research and the snapshot of head teachers at the defined sample of between years one and five of their headship supports the use of this strategy. There are weaknesses in the use of semi-structured interviews including questions over truth, honesty, interpretation, meaning, were the right questions asked? I put controls in place to limit bias, mis-representation, interview piloting to support the data collection and analysis to support correct interpretation of the information shared. These controls were robust and extracted from established literature on methodology and methods. It is not possible to know with total certainty whether the respondents were openly honest and truthful. There is only the recorded word of these respondents to substantiate their views. It is also not possible to know if the respondents were providing what they perceived I wanted to hear rather than their true views. Again, controls to summarise, re-phrase and clarify helped to nullify this potential weakness were built into this research. The questions asked were designed to be open and not leading or mis-leading in any way, however, different questions may have taken the research in a different direction. One example is the role of gender in the journey to headship. This research defined the sample head teachers as merely that, head teachers within year one to five of their first headship. Some potentially contributory factors in their journey to headship were argued out of this research e.g. gender, ethnicity, age. As I argued

in the literature review and design chapter, these factors could themselves form a substantial research project, these were conscious and informed design choices. Importantly, the emergent themes have been realised as a synthesis of twenty separate views of the journey to headship. The respondents could not have collaborated on these views nor do they know who took part in this research; this supports the strength in the findings as valid and reliable. The data was handled sensitively, reduced and synthesised to identify and form common themes. These themes emerged strongly and to avoid misrepresentation the language associated with the number of respondents was defined and used consistently. Where there were common themes, these emerged as the findings, however, the emergent themes were not checked with the respondents to check that what they said was what they meant and what they meant is what they said. I would argue that the controls in place form some assurance as to the validity of the findings but recognise and note the potential limitations of the research.

This research may well be strengthened by a follow up study that seeks to verify the findings with a wider audience of head teachers in their early years of headship in significantly different settings and contexts. Additionally, extending this research to examine the role of the 'argued out' factors may also add to the on-going research agenda.

6.5 Implications following this research.

There are a number of potential implications following the conclusions of this research that may well support the drive to prevent the leadership crisis. Firstly, the implications for policy – The importance of coaching and mentoring as an effective leadership tool for incumbent and aspirational leaders has been established. Coaching and mentoring can

support the growth of leaders, at all levels, and its insertion into Initial Teacher Training routes and aspiring senior and middle leader development programmes would support leaders at all levels. Inclusion within the teaching and head teacher standards would support its effective use in settings across the country, and may well have implications for international policy too.

Secondly, there are implications for leadership – I have already established the importance of the use of coaching and mentoring as an effective leadership development tool, leaders need to ensure that this is built into the culture and CPD of a setting. Additionally supported by coaching and mentoring is the opportunity for leaders to facilitate apprenticeship style development opportunities at all levels. A systematic programme of internal and external opportunities to bring about change and develop aspects of the provision, within other schools and settings will support leadership talent for the future. Specifically, it will develop a sense of self-belief and recognition of readiness for further leadership challenges. Leaders need to consider how these opportunities can be realised within their own settings, across clusters of schools and Local Authorities; there is nothing to prevent these being cross border internal and external settings. Importantly, leaders may well benefit from talent identification in a more formal and structured way; none of the other recommendations will come to fruition without a talent pool of aspirant leaders to develop.

Thirdly, there are implications for initial teacher training - undergraduate teachers may well benefit from an understanding of coaching and mentoring and its use as an effective tool to inform and improve provision alongside change management techniques. The undergraduates of today may well be the aspirant leaders of tomorrow.

Finally, there are implications for research – Further research into talent management and talent identification may support practice within settings. Further research into the role and development of self-belief in middle, senior and aspirant head teachers may inform further policy and practice developments. Additionally, research into what makes an effective apprenticeship style leadership placement and the role of effective placements in leadership development may well inform policy and practice. This is notably important with the respondents’ mixed views on the value of NPQH in preparation for headship.

The conclusions presented here offer a view of leadership development, specifically to support aspirant leaders in the transition to and transformation into the role of the head teacher or principal. The models presented both as unique contributions to knowledge or amended aspects of currently accepted practice are not without the potential for disagreement. As previously argued and discussed, the linear models presented here are not without criticism. In part, the disagreement stems from the view that over control or dictation of leadership programmes and practices may inhibit and diminish leadership practice and potential of those enacting the leadership. The protagonists of the opposing view to those presented as part of my conclusion would argue that there is no ‘one-way to lead’ and that the leadership activities supported and promoted stem from a centrally controlled policy agenda that is also controlling knowledge. Over control and overt dictation may lead to a reduction in doing what is right within a setting for fear of being found to be ‘off-message’. In turn, this may diminish leadership effectiveness by reducing the potential to ‘take a risk’ against the leadership policy being promoted.

As previously argued, I share some agreement with elements of this opposing view, I too do not believe there is only one way to lead or enact leadership within a setting and here there is some resonance with the opposing view. The context of schools is so dynamic and varying that no single leadership programme, style or instruction can prepare aspirant leaders for the challenges of headship. However, this research supports the view that structured leadership development may be beneficial in promoting the effective transition to and transformation into senior leaders. Talent management and seizing opportunities to enable aspiring leaders to 'have a go' at leadership begins the first professional growth and commences the filling of these aspiring leaders' 'personal capacity' toolboxes.

Completing this research has broadened my understanding and awareness of wider issues within the academic literature regarding leadership preparation, development and transition. It is interesting to reflect upon the possibility that I am, arguably, a product of the leadership systems discussed here that form the opposing view of some of my conclusions. Has my perception of the 'right' way to lead and leadership itself been affected by the controlled knowledge and policy that has surrounded my personal journey to headship? It is, arguably, impossible to disassociate myself from past experiences to answer this without bias. Certainly my own experiences of NPQH and other leadership development programmes would support the opposing view presented that indeed there is an 'accepted way' to enact leadership. What influence remains from these experiences is again difficult to attribute, however, my practice as a serving head teacher may provide some of the answers. As part of my practice, I have initiated a training ground for leaders of the future and provided opportunities for these leaders to grow and develop their leadership potential and skills. An NQT I appointed six years ago is about to embark upon her journey as an

assistant head teacher in another school, my deputy is on the verge of securing a first headship. I have already had conversations with the current NQT staff about little projects they might consider for the next academic year! In addition to this, I have developed a range of leadership opportunities to support leaders at all levels. Where my current practice falls short against these findings is in the lack of opportunity to practice these skills in a contrasting setting maybe as an apprenticeship style placement. None of these leadership experiences are dictated or prescribed from any published scheme or source. As a result of this research, I will be reflecting on the opportunities provided and look to wider local and national collaborations; I will also be refining my view of talent management. I may well continue further research around the notion of risk within leadership of schools.

6.6 Recommendations following this research.

Incumbent leaders need to identify talent now because of the predicted leadership crisis. These 'talent spotted' potential leaders need to be given a structure leadership development programme that provides a range of opportunities to develop change management skills. This in turn should lead to a positive development in self-belief and following leadership style apprenticeship placements and opportunities a developed sense of readiness for headship. All of these experiences underpinned by effective coaching and mentoring and so leaders should ensure that they and their senior staff are proficient in these skills. All of these opportunities will support the identity transformation to leaders of the future.

6.7 Further work following this research.

The research community interested in leadership development may well benefit from further work on talent identification and how this manifests itself in practice of different

settings. Additionally, further research would support the use of coaching and mentoring and how this can develop self-belief and ultimately affirmation of readiness for headship.

6.8 Overall conclusion

This thesis sought to evaluate the preparation of Primary head teachers for early headship through a social survey of the experiences of Primary head teachers, in the West Midlands.

What supported these respondents in surviving their early headship?

This research is framed within the already established models of leadership development by, among others, Day & Bakioglu (1996) Gronn (1999), Ribbins (2003), Browne-Ferrigno (2003), Earley & Weindling (2007). Through this thesis I have added a contribution to knowledge by the insertion of additional aspects to the already established models, notably Intrinsic motivation making a contribution to personal capacity; Personal capacity adding to the 'staying power' of aspiring leaders; the importance of talent spotting early in an aspiring leader's career, by incumbent leaders, and the role of the incumbent leader as a coach and/or mentor; the role of career-coaching in leadership development, role identity transformation; affirmation of readiness for headship and the importance of self-belief/personal capacity on this readiness; the role of leadership for learning; apprentice style work placements on developing capacity and self-belief.

The leadership journey begins with incumbent leaders identifying talent early, spotting those who show promise as good or better teachers and this leads to early leadership opportunities. This early leadership opportunity allows experimentation and through either success or failure at the leadership opportunities, if supported by effective coaching and mentoring, leads to a growth in self-belief. Self-belief plays an important role along with

leadership apprenticeship opportunities in developing a sense of readiness for headship and the personal capacity of aspiring leaders, affirming the skills and attributes of these 'leaders to be'. This thesis argues for the addition of these aspects into accepted models of leadership preparation and development to support the aspirant leaders of the future and help settings manage the once predicted and now very real leadership crisis.

Appendix 1 - Synthesis of the models of effective skills and attributes with observable features.

Proposed model of effective skills and attributes to raise standards as amalgamated from Hammersley-Fletcher (2002); Wallace (2002); Yukl (2002) and TTA standards (1998)	Observable features to demonstrate skill or attribute
Organise resources; establish staff and resource	Verbal reference to resources Request to complete audit
Planning; prioritise, organise.	Giving planning, timetables, schedules, meeting agenda (Give or request organisational/operational document)
Keep knowledge up to date, disseminate, informed use of research/inspection.	Sharing policies, monitoring information, DCSF guidance, LA Give policy/practice guidance Review policy/practice guidance
Review resources, analyse, understand and interpret data.	Attainment or achievement information/analysis, request to complete audit Give data analysis Review data and analyse
Raise standards, secure high quality teaching and learning.	Sharing policies, sharing good practice, instruction Give policy/practice guidance Review policy/practice guidance
Inform staff, disseminate, communicate, negotiate, chair effectively	Meetings are prompt to start and finish, number of staff contributions, number of questions asked, number of pieces of information shared Staff contribute openly Staff receive information Staff are encouraged to respond Meetings finish on time Meetings start promptly at agreed time
Be positive, effective climate	Open or closed body language, tone of speech Staff body language is open Staff body language is closed Discussion is professional Discussion is unprofessional
Lead by example, share practice, provide guidance	Sharing policies, sharing good practice, instruction, Give policy/practice guidance Review policy/practice guidance
Support, consult, clarify, ratify	number of staff contributions, number of questions asked, number of pieces of information shared Staff contribute openly

	Staff receive information Staff are encouraged to respond
Be approachable, constructive relationships	Open or closed body language, tone of speech, Open or closed body language, tone of speech Staff body language is open Staff body language is closed Discussion is professional Discussion is unprofessional

Appendix 2 – Synthesis and comparison of successful change models.

Fullan (2001)	Wallace (2003)	Lumby and Foskett (2008)
Initiation	Orchestration - Flexible Planning and coordination	Culture through ideas that are promoted
Implementation – Need for change	Orchestration – Culture building and Communication	Culture through ideas that are promoted
Implementation – Clarity of change	Orchestration – Culture building and Communication	Cultural differences within groups/sub groups
Local Characteristics - Teacher	Orchestration – Differentiated support	Culture – process in operation within the school
Local Characteristics - Teacher	Orchestration – Differentiated support	Culture – output of the school.

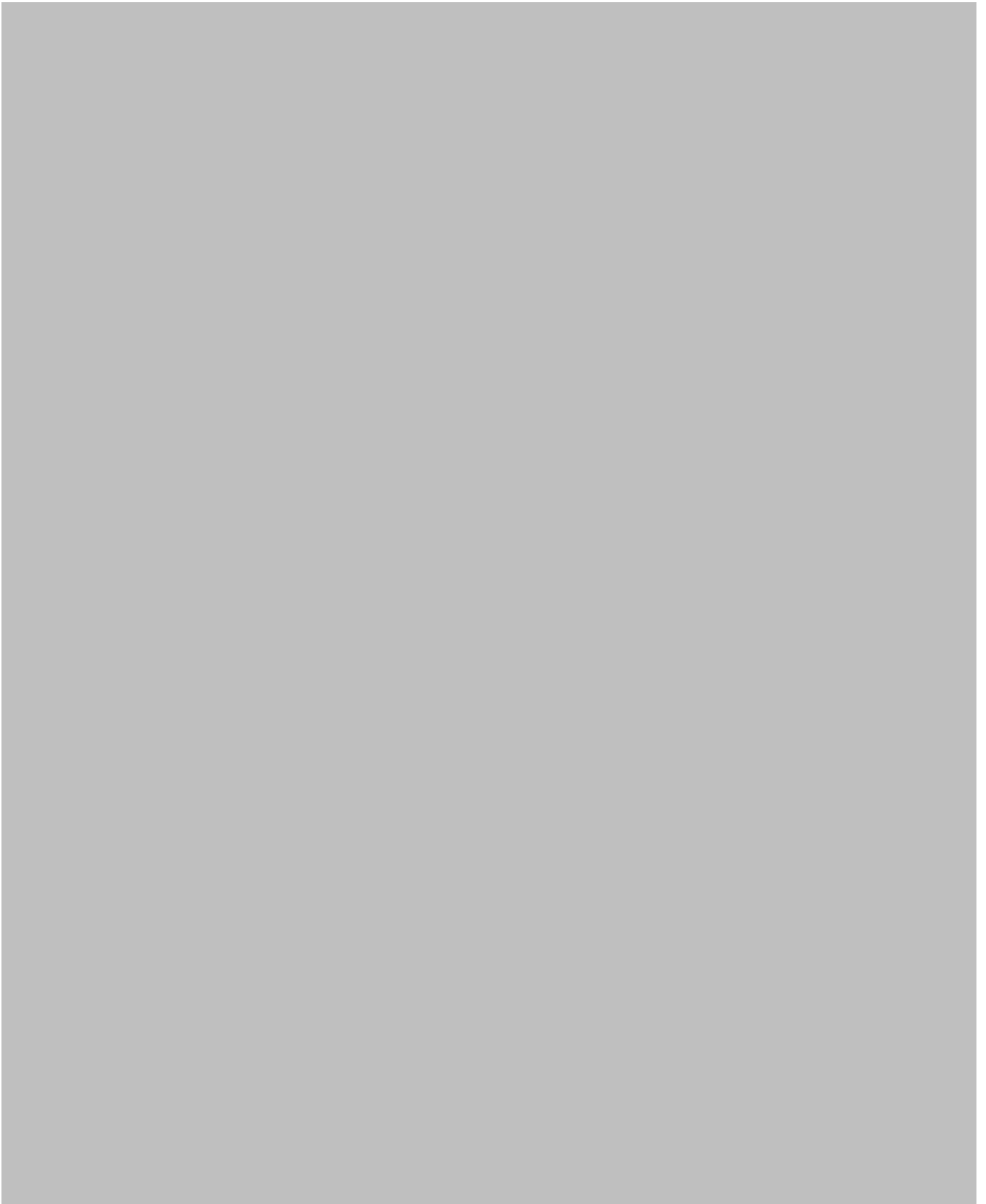
Appendix 3 – Interview schedule.

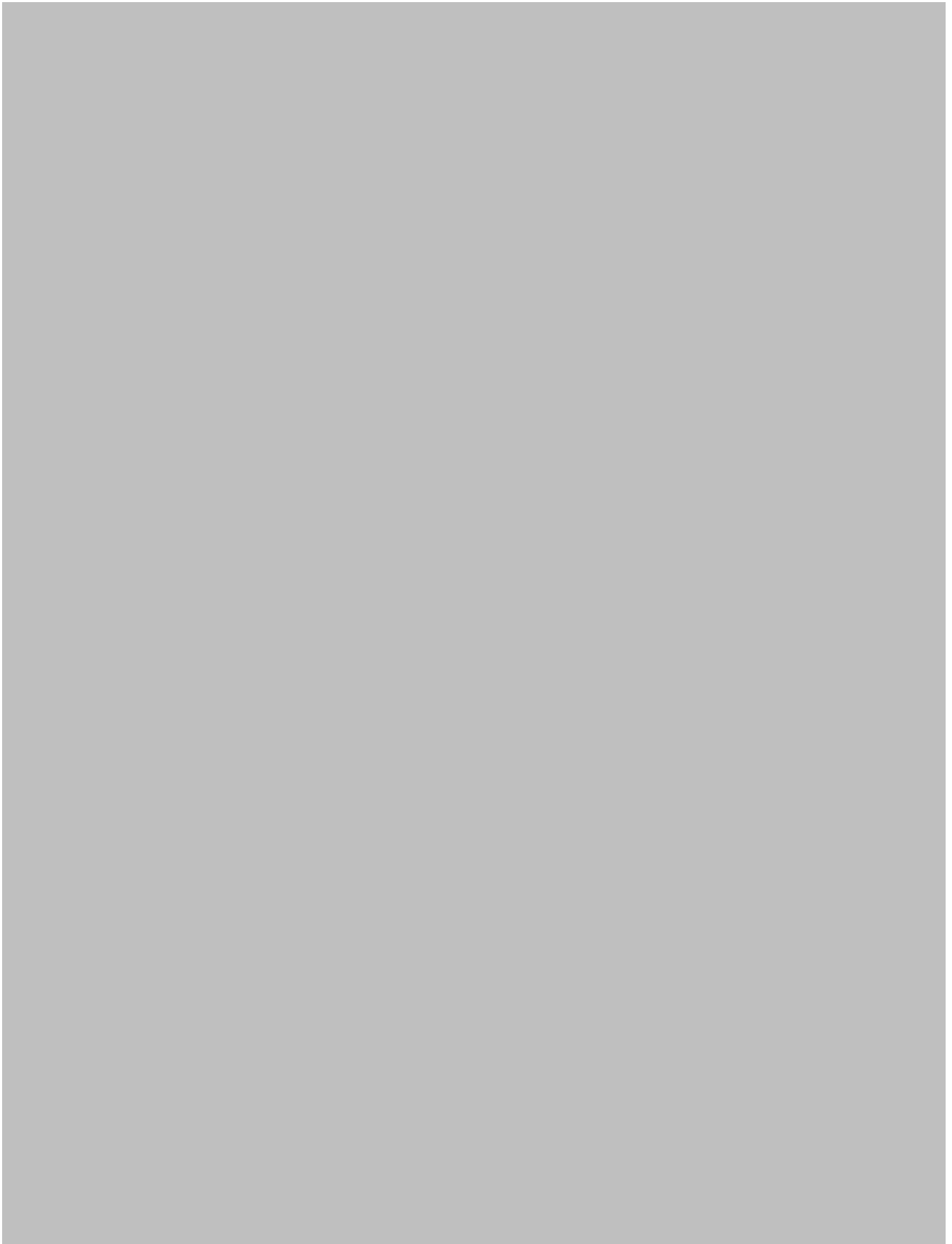
From your early, pre-employment life, what sort of people influenced you?	'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?' -RQ1
Can you set the context of when you first started teaching?	'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?' -RQ1
What influenced your decision to start a career as a teacher?	'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?' -RQ1
During your early career, what support did you receive? How did this influence and form your ideas of teaching?	'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?' -RQ1
How would you describe your first encounter with leadership, with you as the leader?	'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?' -RQ1
At what point did you decide to pursue headship as a career goal?	'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?' -RQ1
Following this decision to pursue headship as a career goal, when did you feel ready to apply for a headship post?	'On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?' –RQ2
What supported you in developing your leadership skills to get to this point?	'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?' –RQ3
Were there any perceived setbacks in reaching your goal of becoming a head teacher?	'On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?' –RQ2
What supported your transition from 'teacher' to leader?	'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?' -RQ1
How did you perceive the role of the NPQH programme in your preparation for and transition to headship?	'On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?' –RQ2

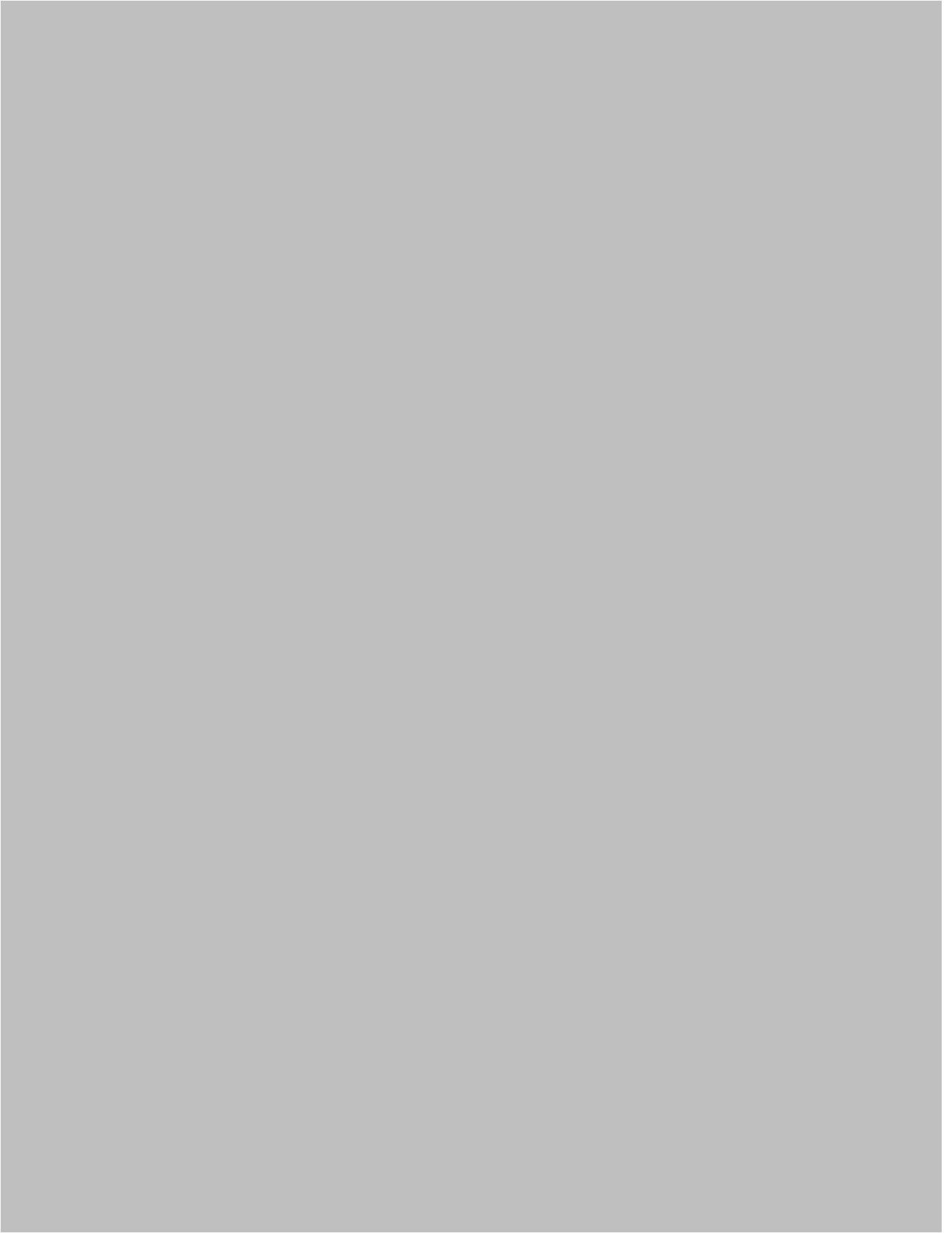
What were your perceptions of the strengths of NPQH in your preparation for and transition to headship?	'On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?' –RQ2
What were your perceptions of any weaknesses of NPQH in your preparation for and transition to headship?	'On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?' –RQ2
How did your conceptual understanding of the role of head teacher develop through your early headship experiences?	'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?' -RQ1
During the change from 'teacher' to head teacher – how was this transformation into a different way of working?	'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?' -RQ1
How do you judge your preparation for headship?	'How do head teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early headship?' -RQ1
What are your perceptions of the challenges of your early headship?	'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?' –RQ3
On reflection, how prepared were you for the challenges of your early headship?	'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?' –RQ3 'On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?' –RQ2
Is there anything you would change about your preparation for headship?	'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?' –RQ3 'On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?' –RQ2

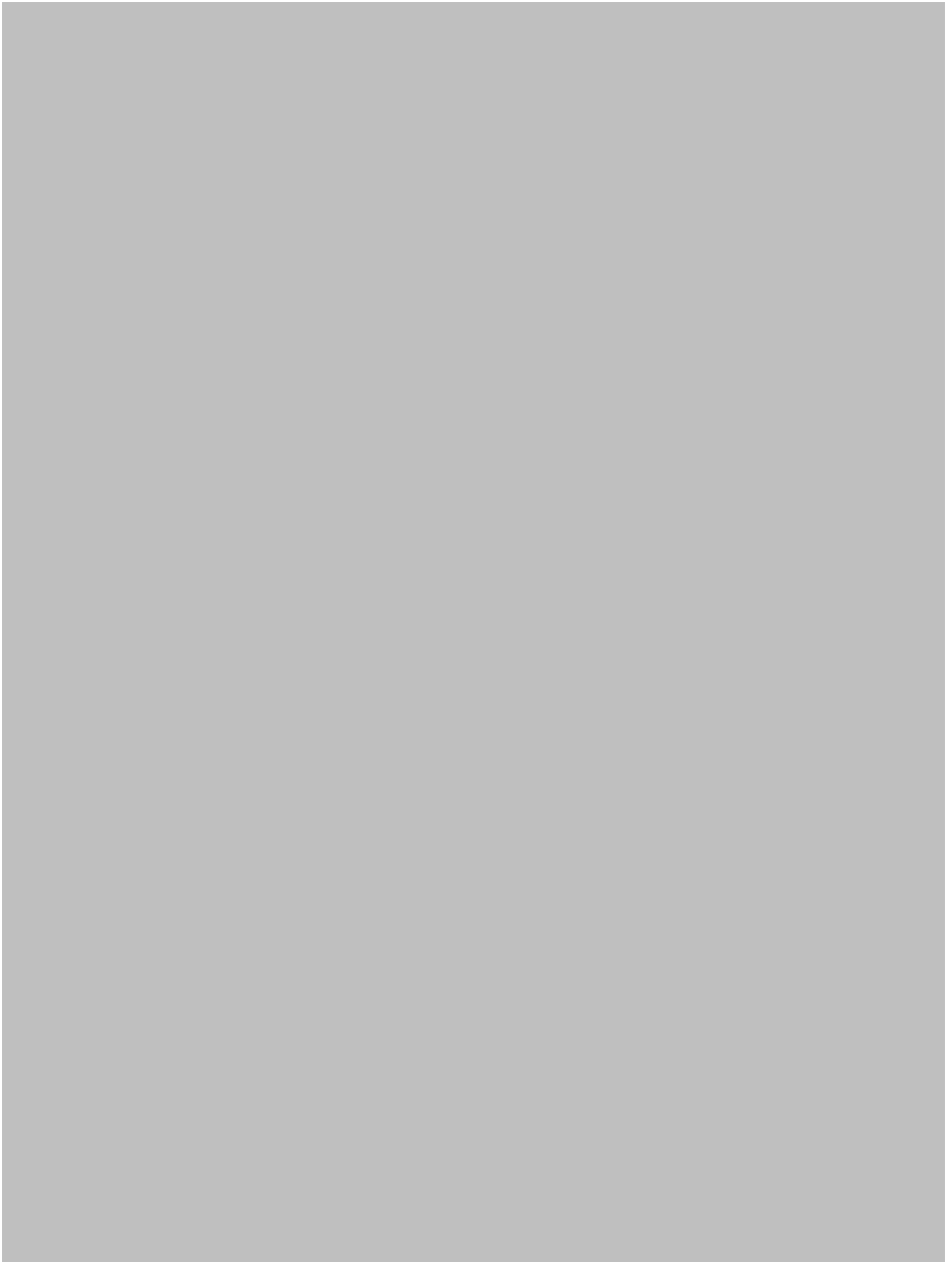
Is there anything you would keep the same about your preparation for headship?	<p>'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?' –RQ3</p> <p>'On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?' –RQ2</p>
Could you identify any particular event or experience that you have drawn on that has, on reflection, helped your early headship be successful?	<p>'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?' –RQ3</p> <p>'On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation?' –RQ2</p>
Was there anything, in your perception, missing from your early headship preparation?	<p>'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?' –RQ3</p>
Do you have two pieces of advice for aspirant head teachers that would help them, from your experiences, to be successful in early headship?	<p>'Are there any common essential experiences they all have needed to draw upon that could support potential future aspirant head teachers?' –RQ3</p>

Appendix 4 – Anonymous interview transcript.

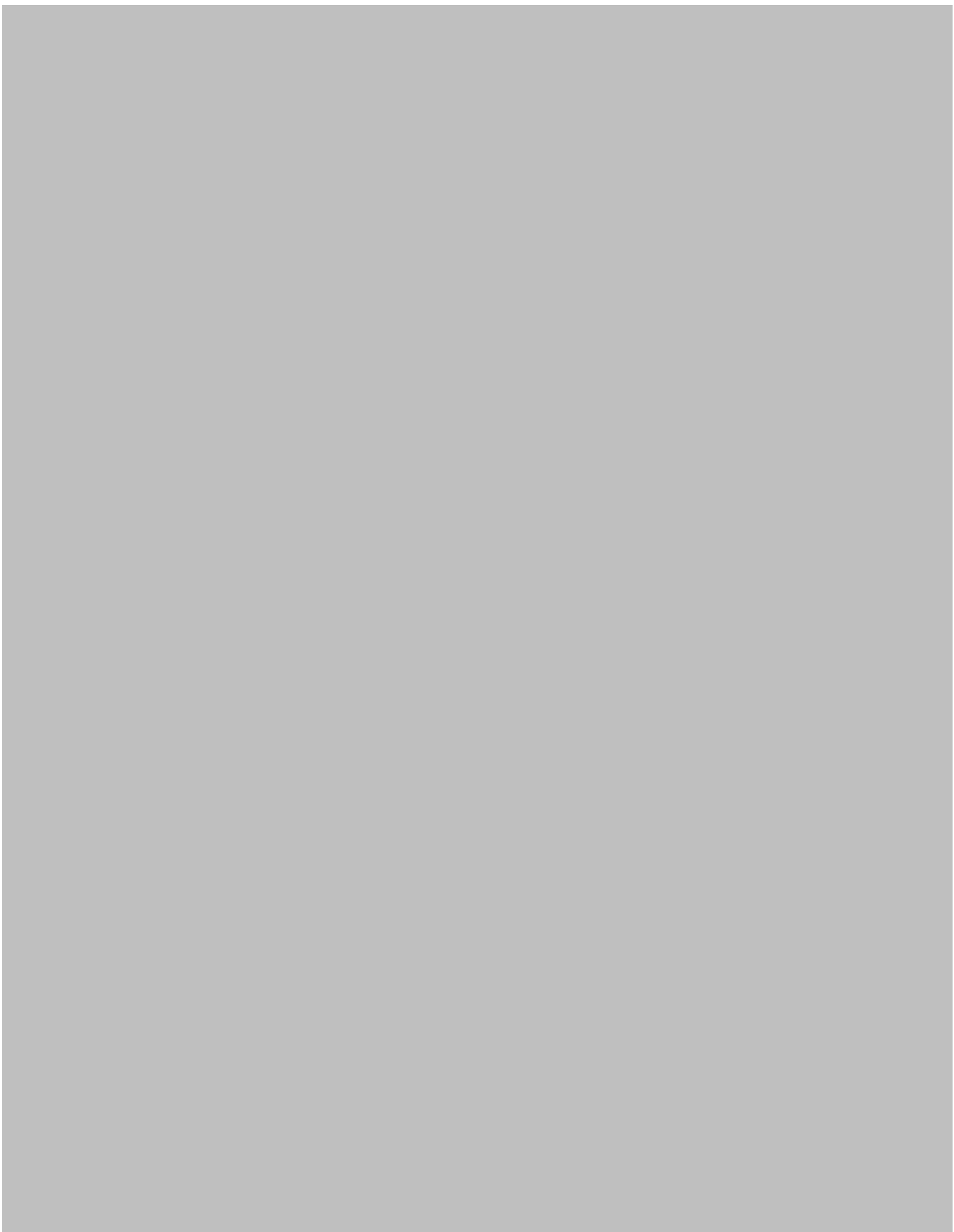


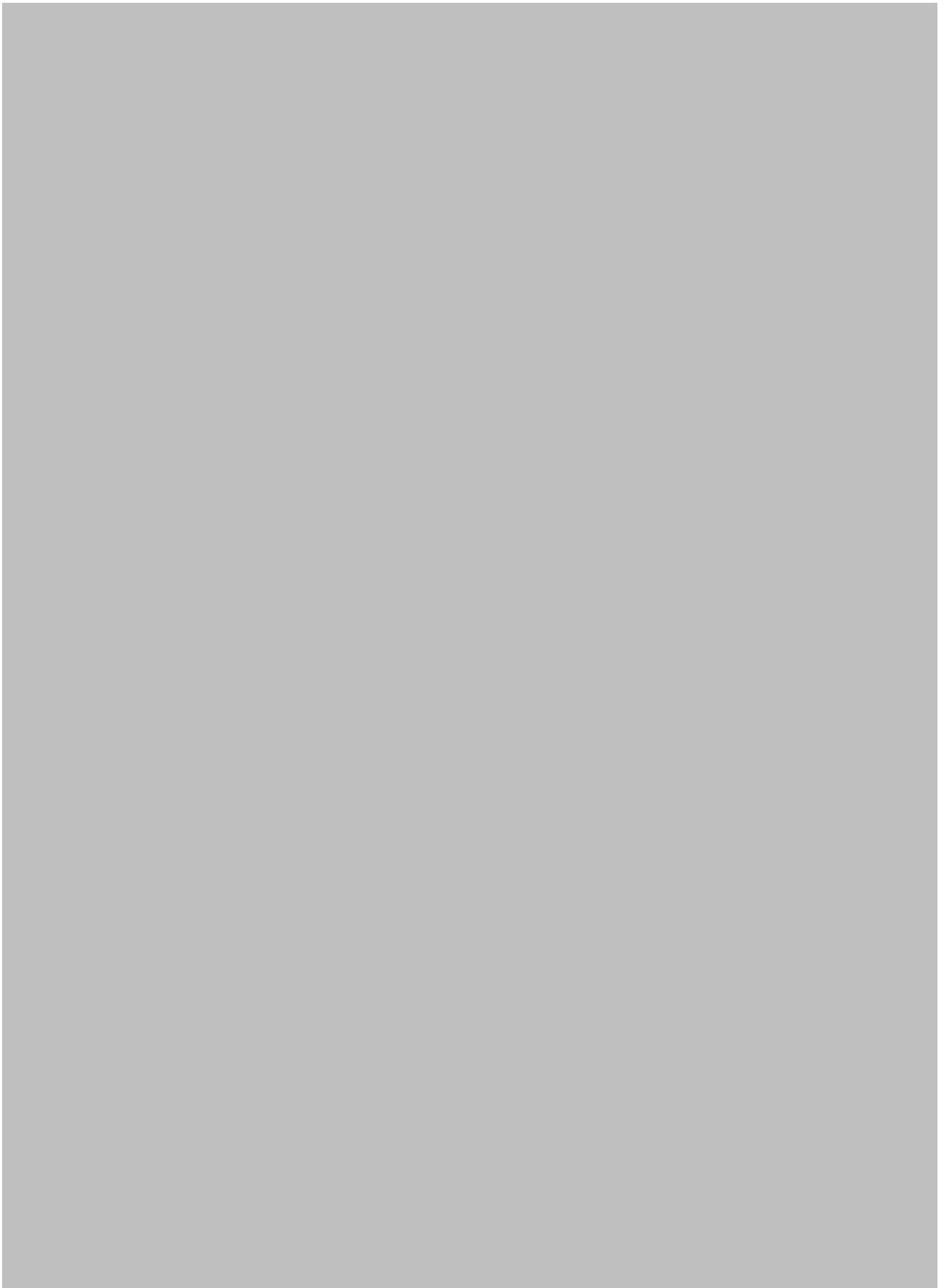


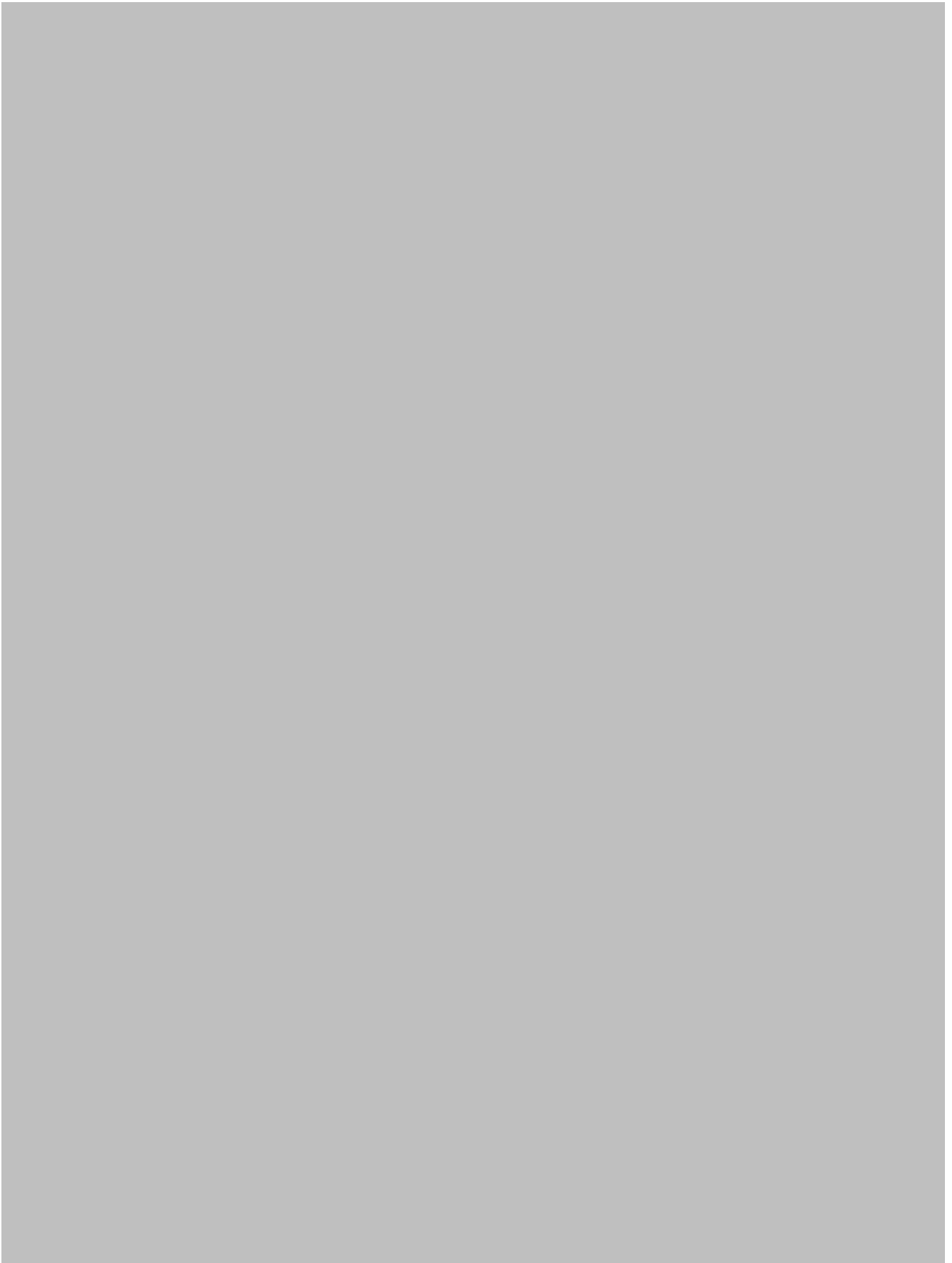


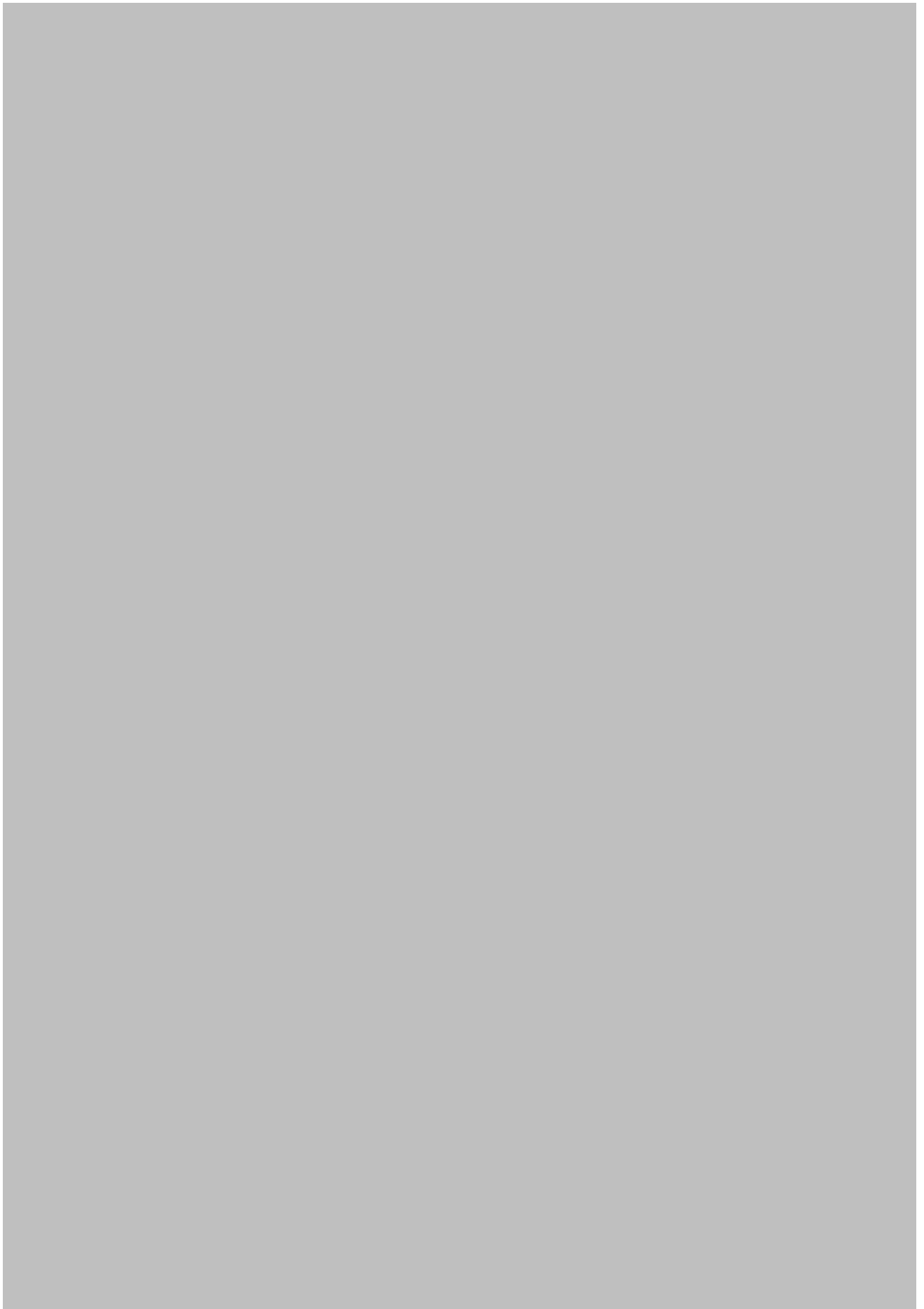


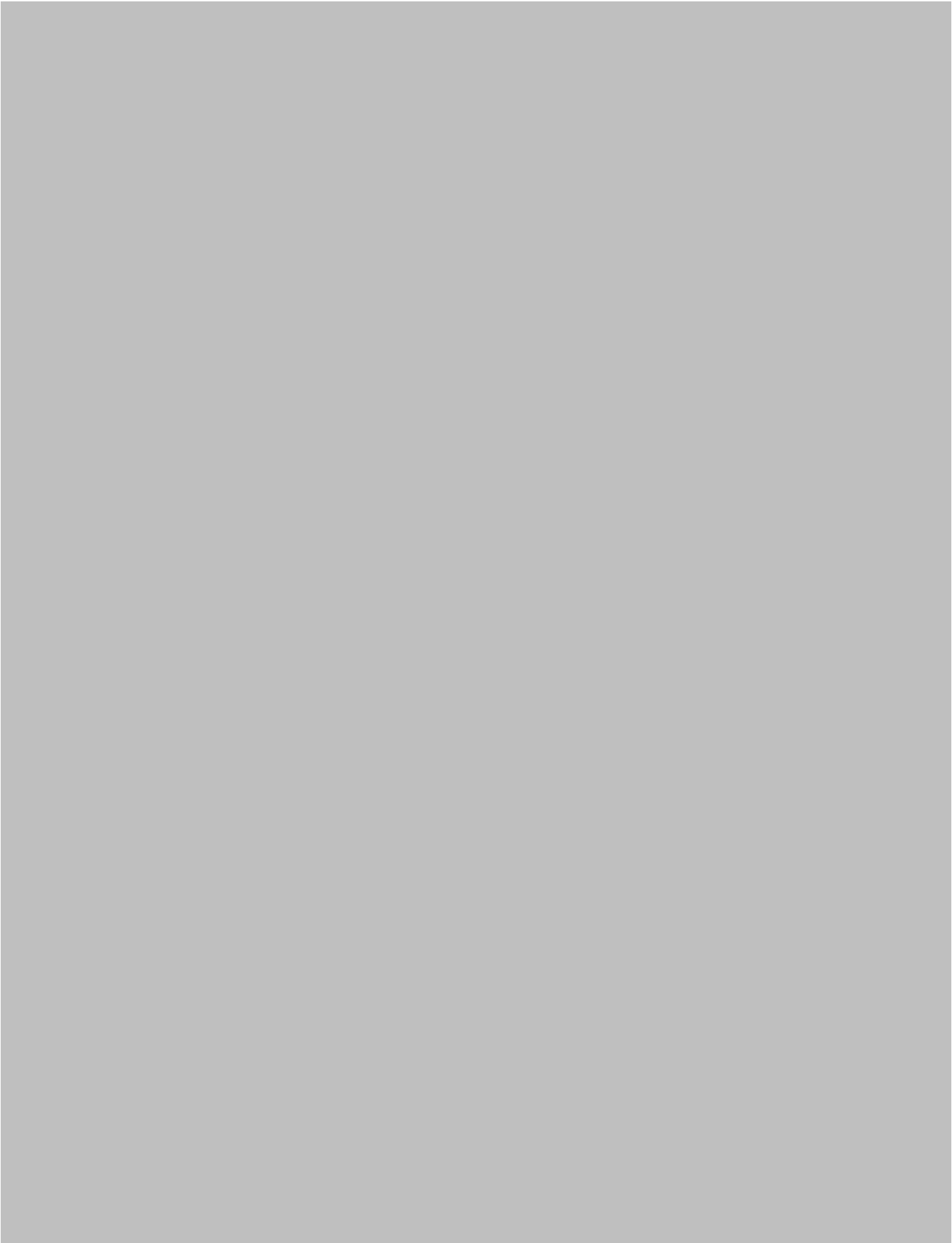


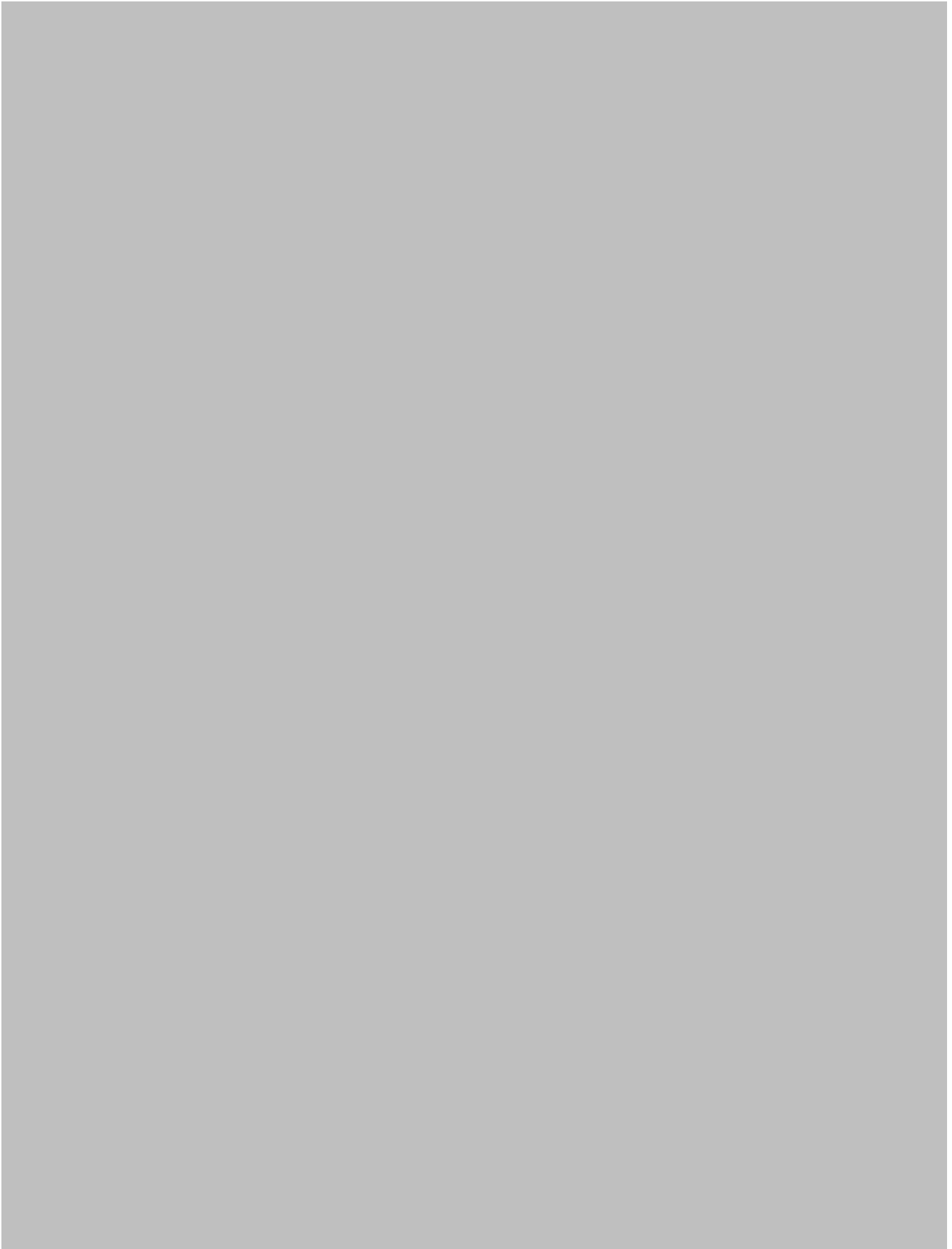


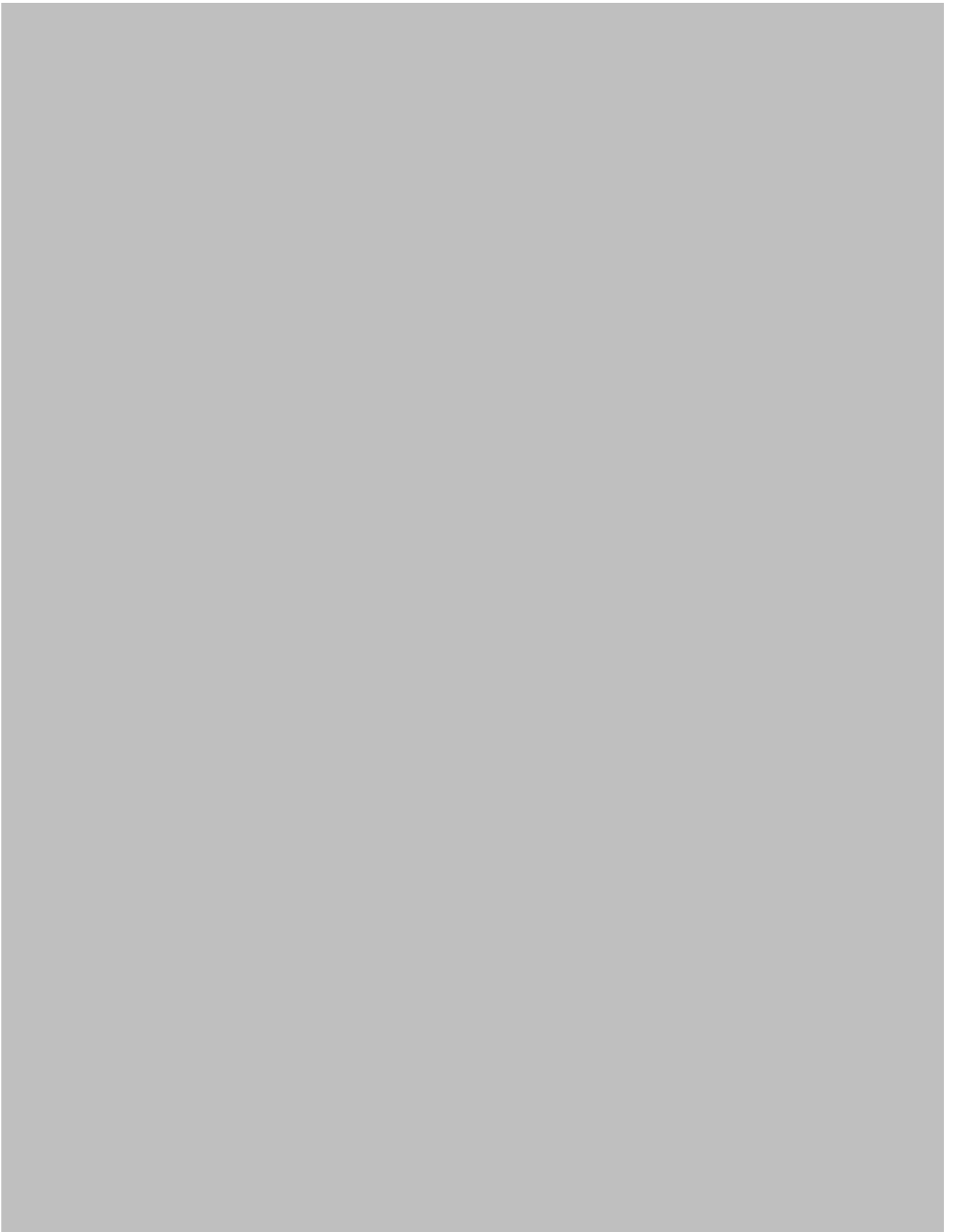


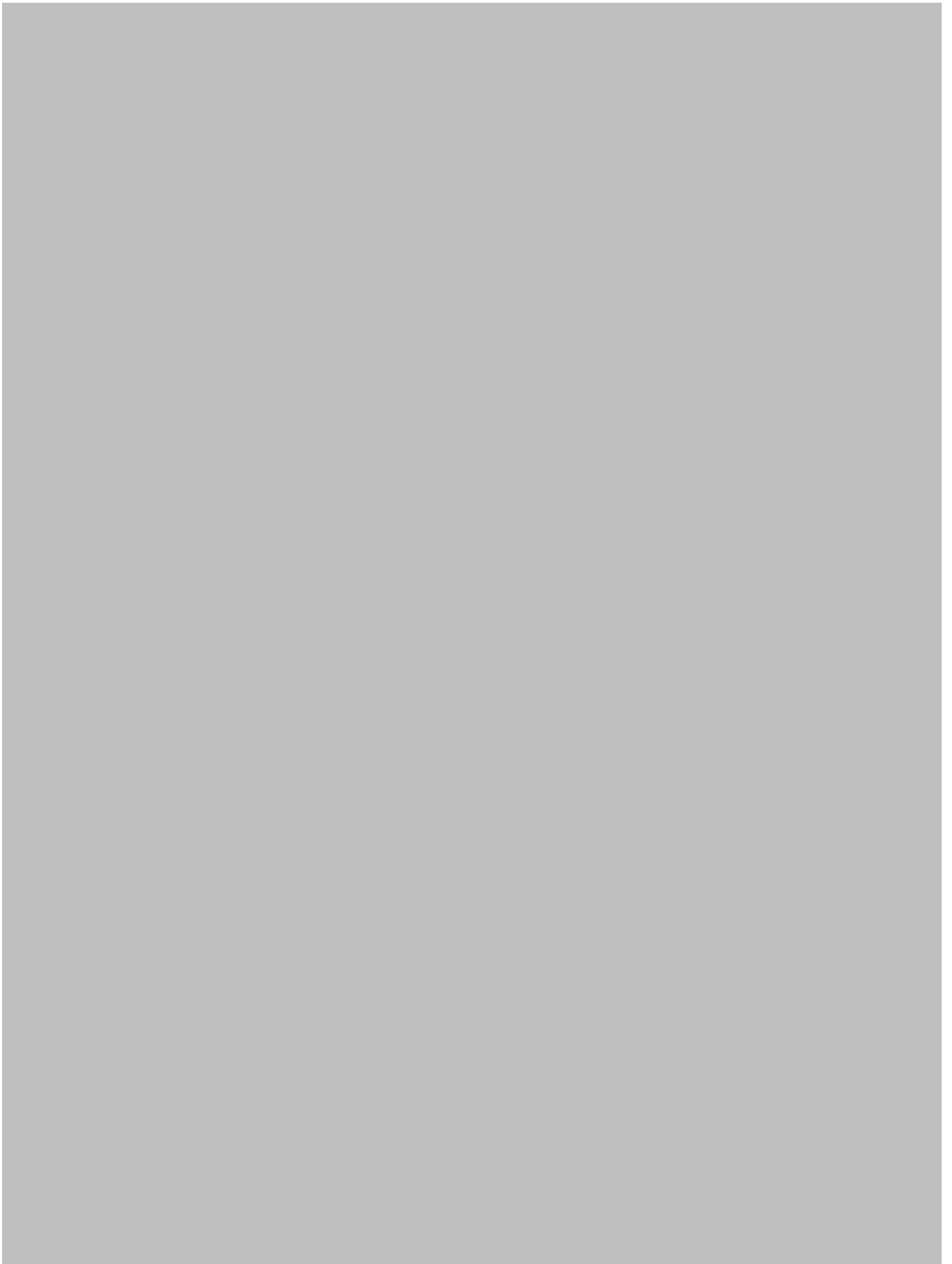


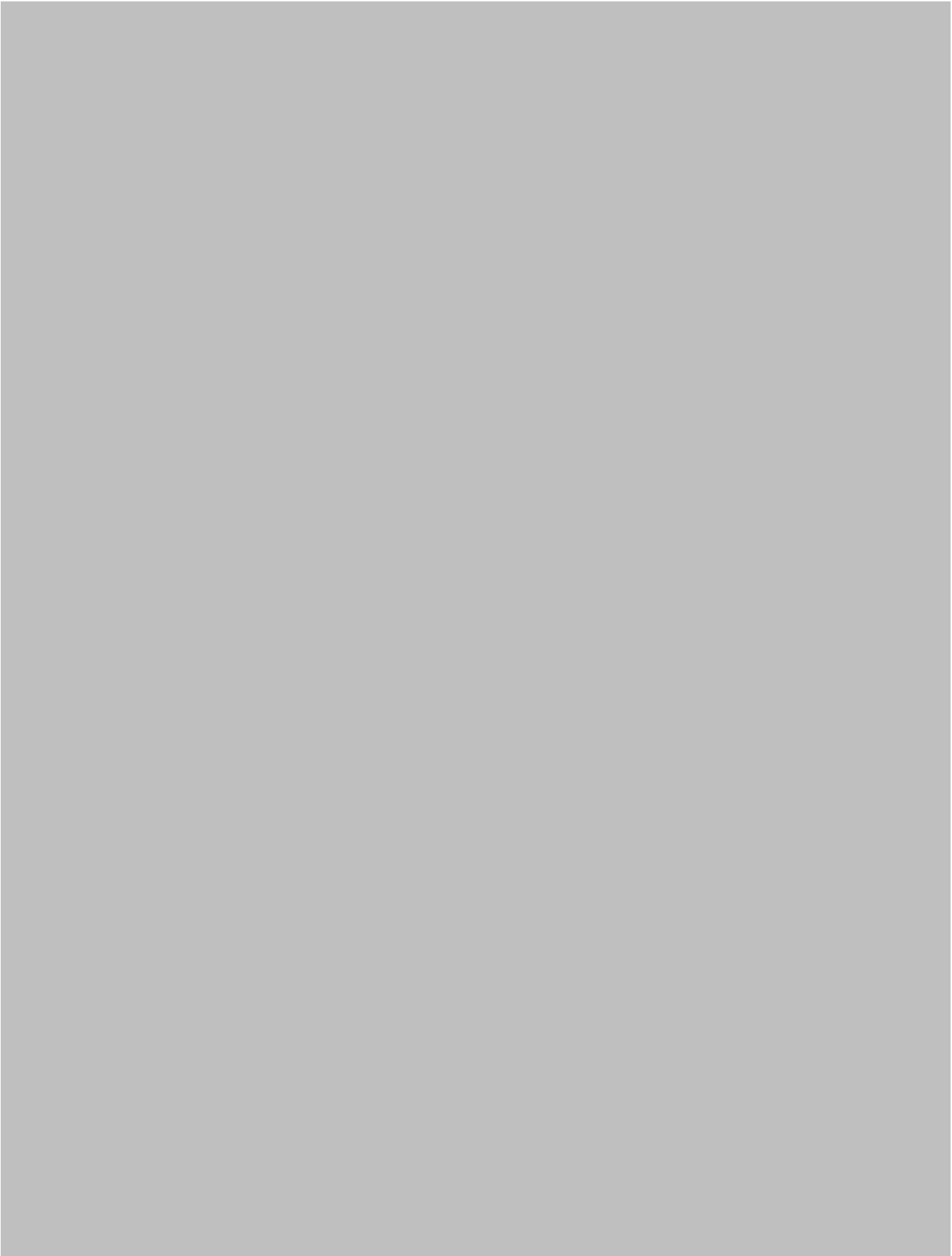


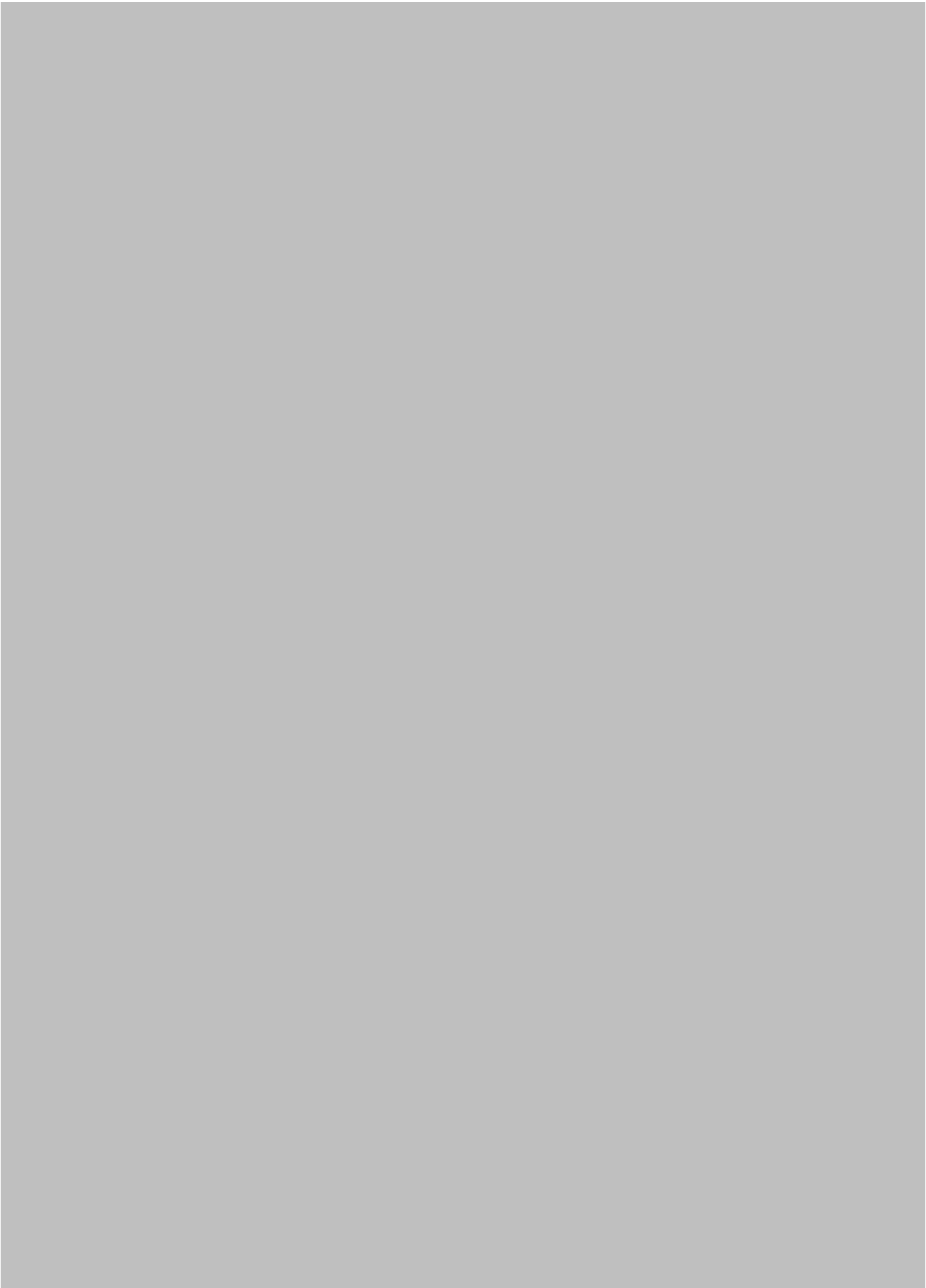




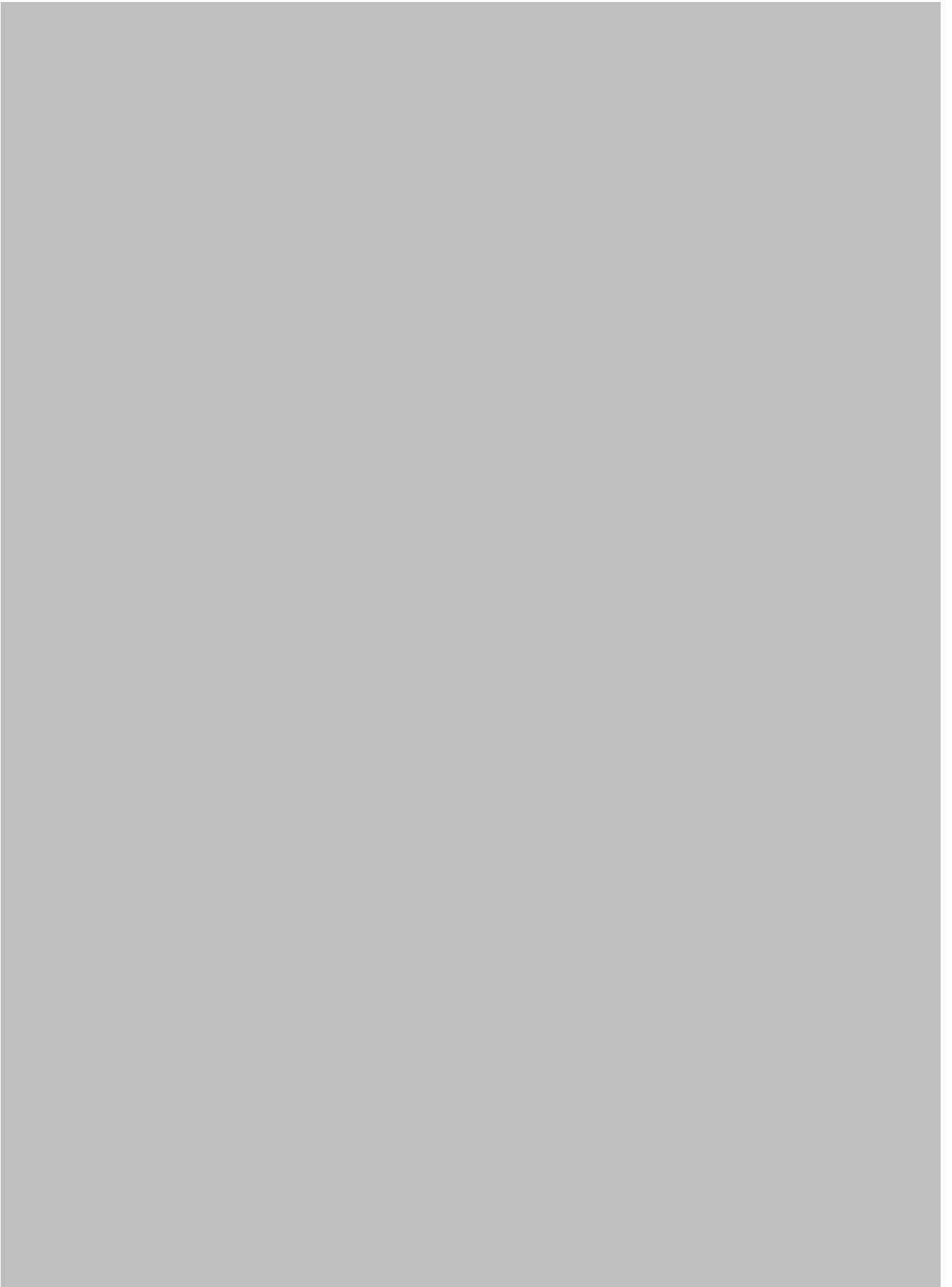


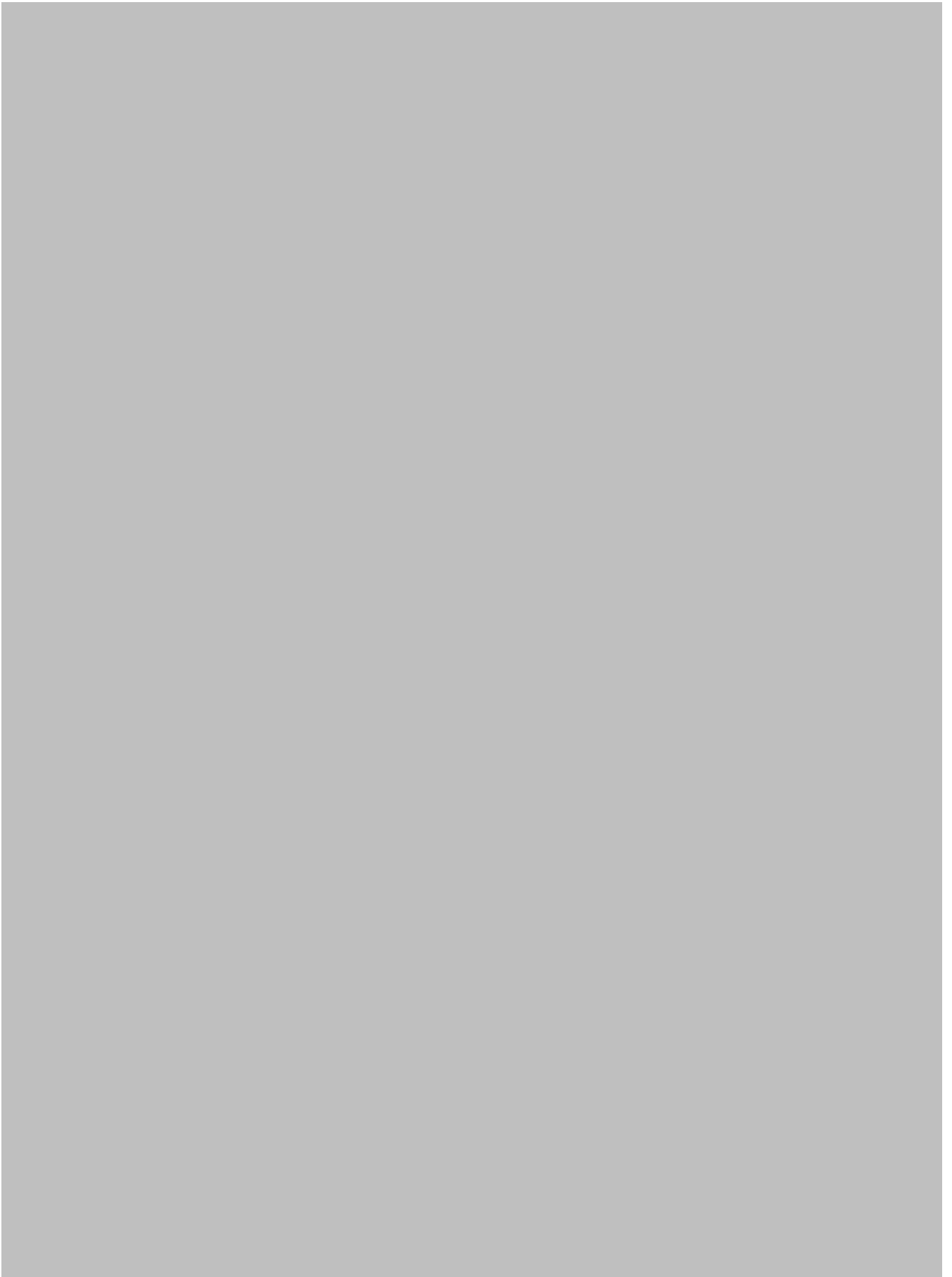


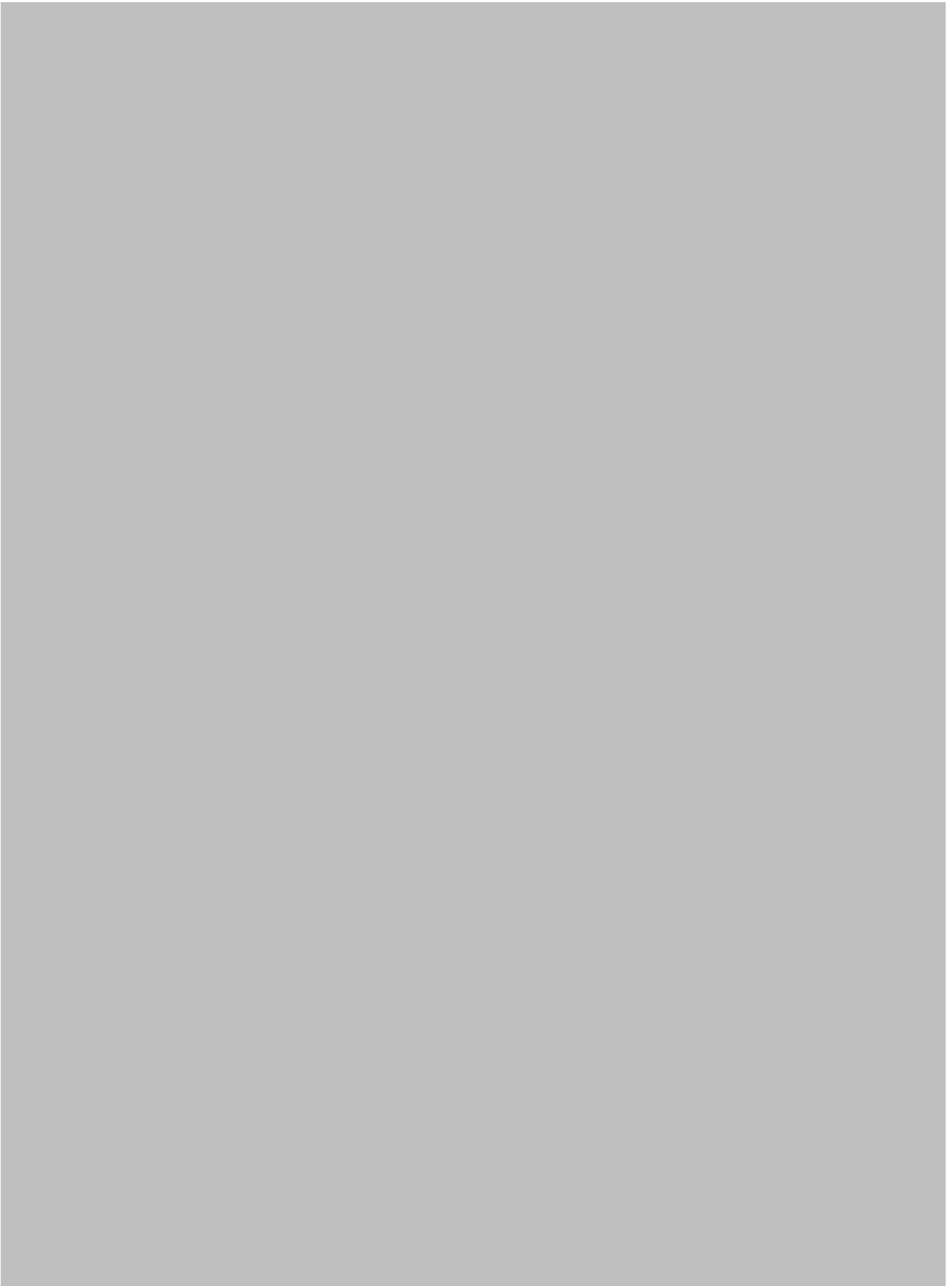


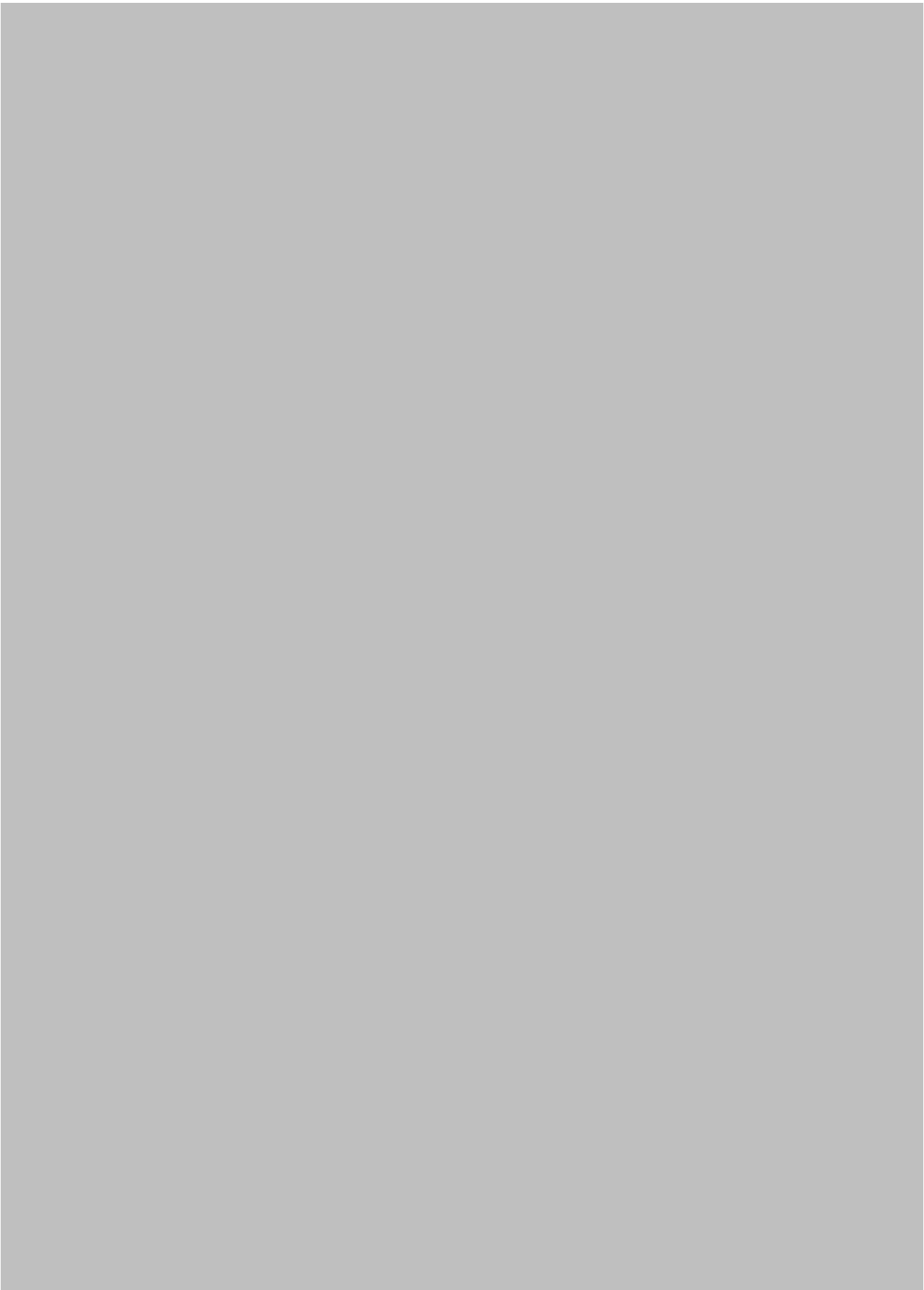


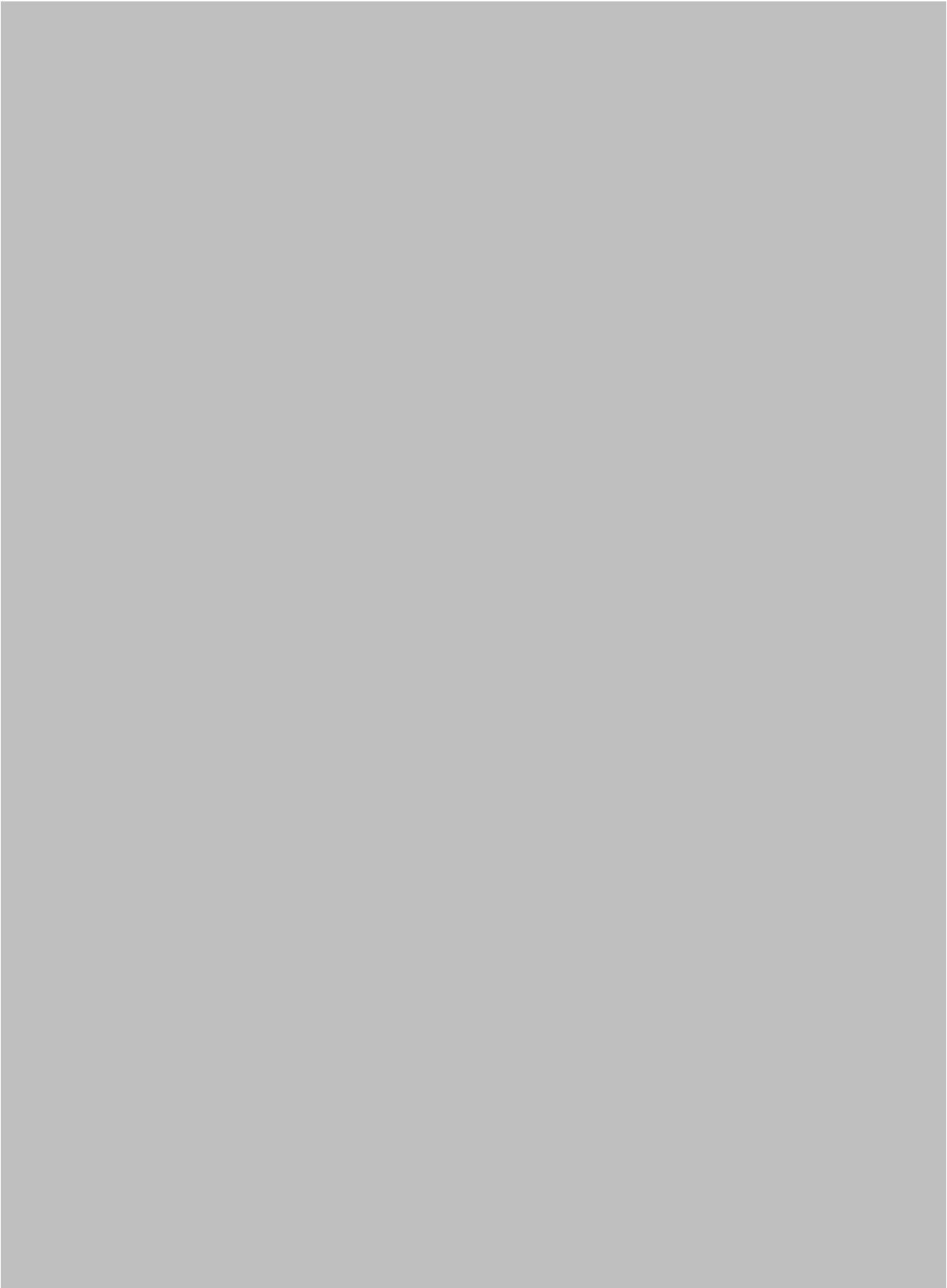


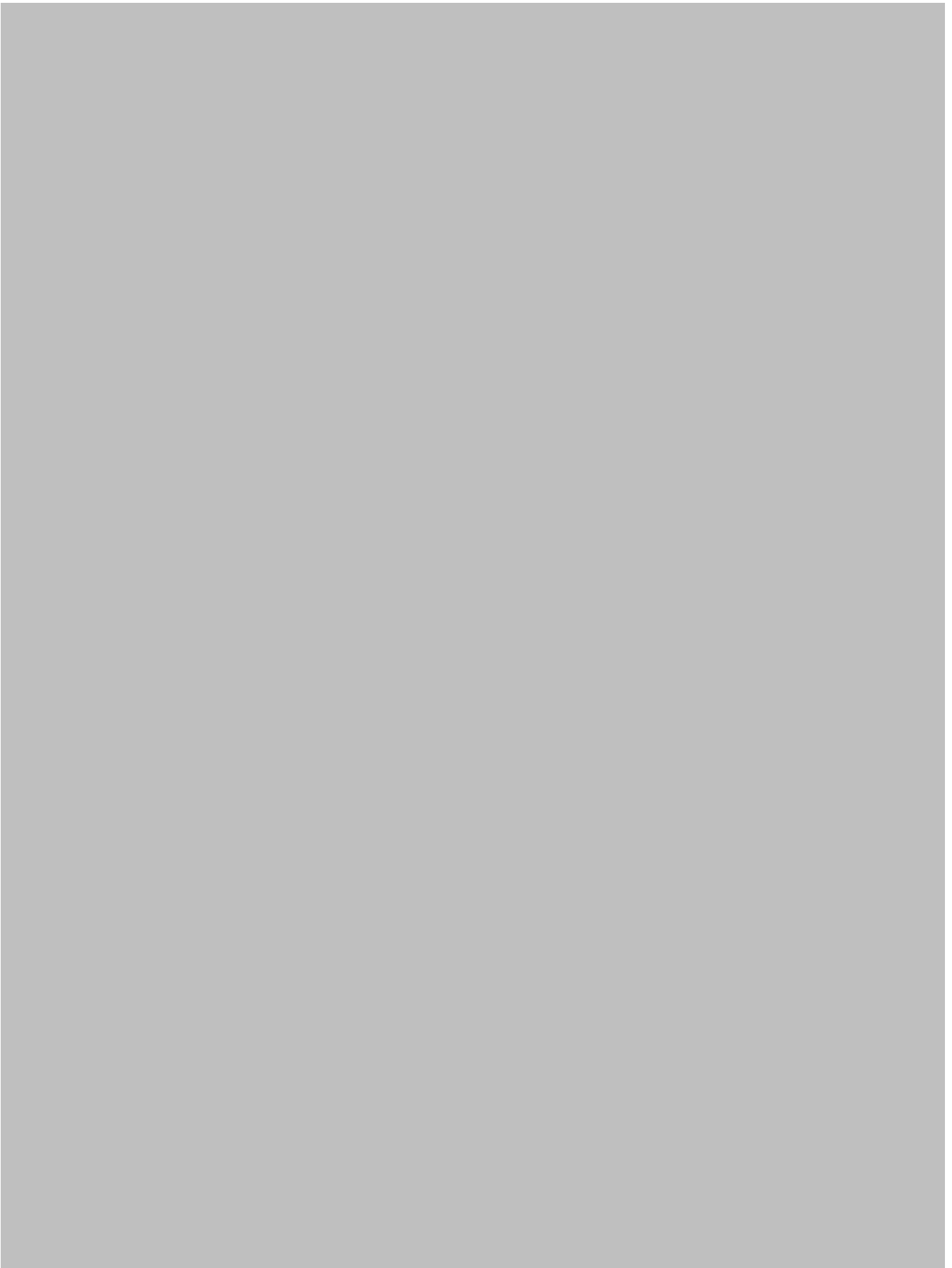


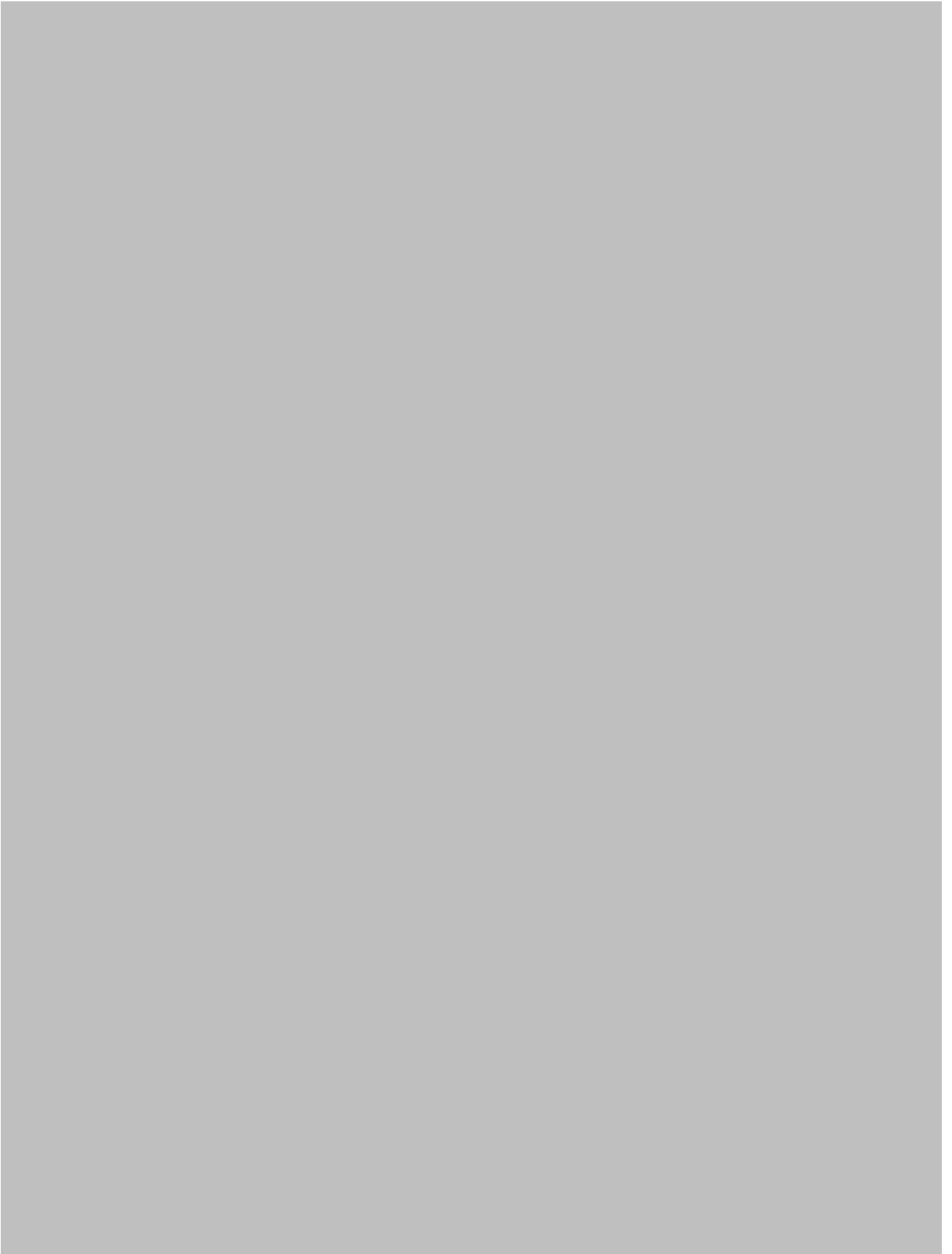


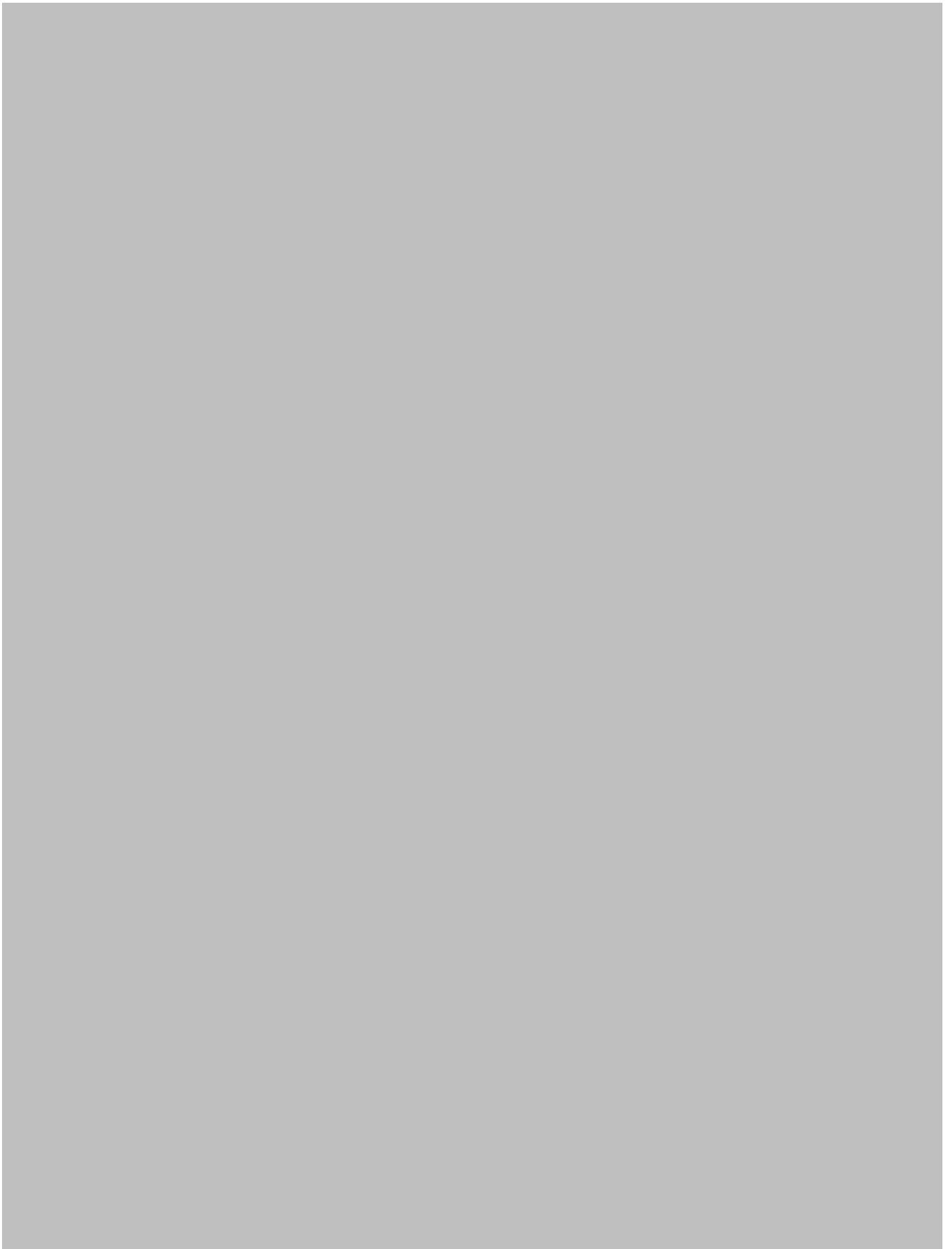


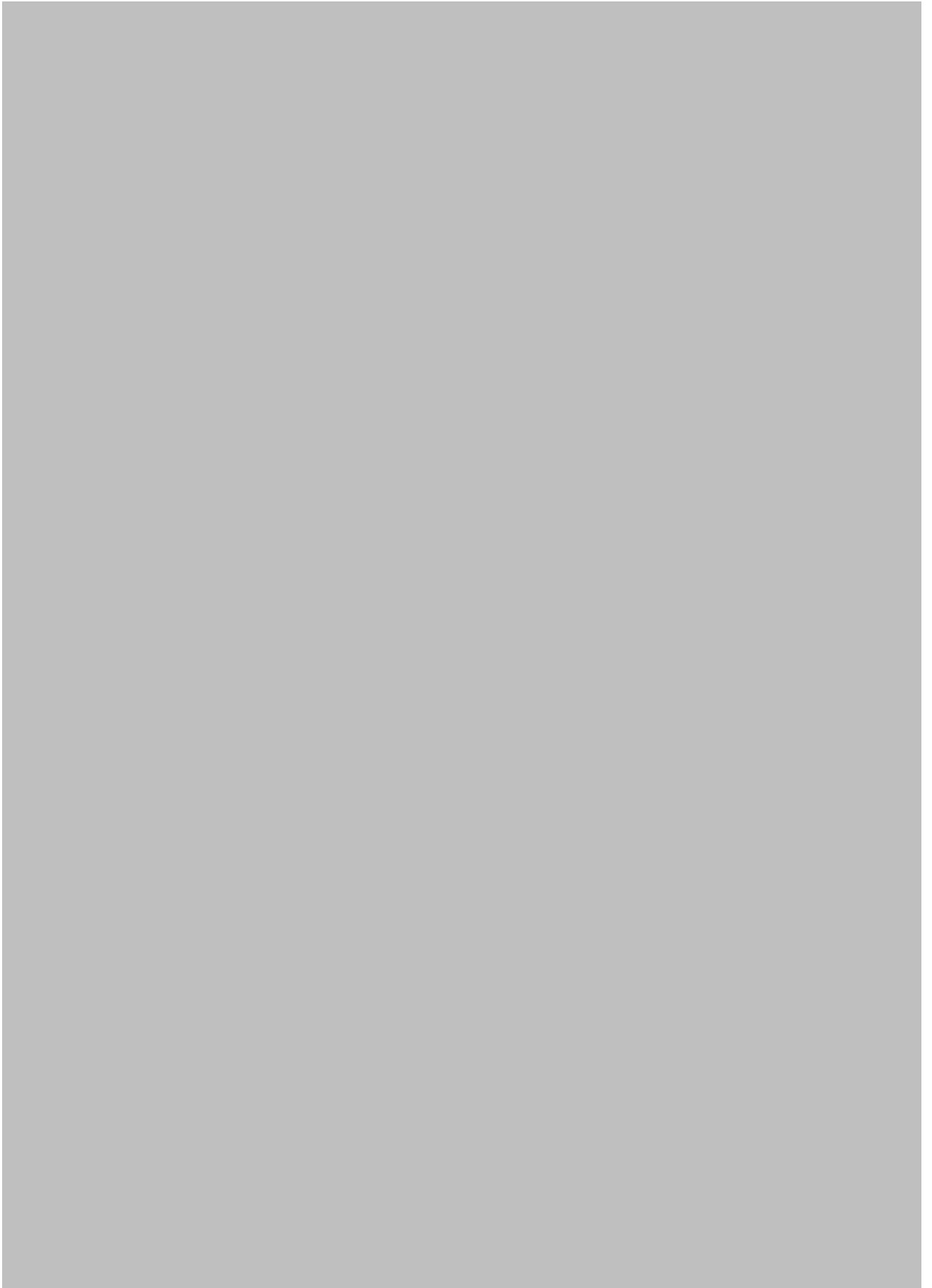














Appendix 5 – Examples of transcript analysis.

From your early, pre-employment life, what sort of people influenced you?	①	‘How do Head Teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early Headship?’ -RQ1 A _I	<p>mentor team Teaching: team ethic, pedagogy. Early teacher, good personal experience at primary school. Head teacher, strong moral code + secondary literacy teacher. Emotional driver.</p>
All bar 6 an influential teacher, HT, college impression that made an		‘How do Head Teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early Headship?’ -RQ1 A _{II}	<p>Secondary school teacher - person for advice. College teacher raised personal aspiration. HT put that in submission for headship. Had extraordinary reverence in it. Mastered! Good role model. Person I emulated. Father, active - encourage us to do and achieve what we want. Potentially good HT, focus personal, human. Still use many of her strategies.</p>
		‘How do Head Teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early Headship?’ -RQ1 A ₂	<p>No not really. Remains HT. Person for headship, philosophy, taking any rubbish of the job. There for the children. Not wanting anything in school. Too friendly but about with a view to the other with the school resources. Not really, but it is a teacher who was a teacher.</p>
		‘How do Head Teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early Headship?’ -RQ1 A _{2II}	<p>An advisor who had great knowledge, management skills. People management. This was approach. No. HT, second school, great influence on being a good teacher and aspire to be her (Cole). How she inspired and built teams.</p>
		‘How do Head Teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early Headship?’ -RQ1 A _{3I}	<p>Dad, wanted to better himself. Moral compass, do the right thing. Dedicated friend's parent, taught in a really tough area. At best, open evening, tutor raised aspiration to be a teacher, never looked back.</p>
		‘How do Head Teachers experience their own preparation for their role in early Headship?’ -RQ1 A _{3II}	<p>My teacher. Never wanted to be a HT but always a teacher. Mum, Carol, parent. Admired 'you will never do what I've done'. I suppose I am everything she wanted. Secondary teacher influence. Secondary HT teacher. Her love of teaching inspired me to teach. I wanted to do that.</p>

How did you perceive the role of the NPQH programme in your preparation for and transition to headship? (1)		Didn't find it fantastic (perception better than actual situation) 2006. Useful final assessment - acquiring dev with group. <u>I don't (any more) getting a qualification.</u>
	<p>On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation? - RQ2 A1</p> <p>On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation? - RQ2 A1 II</p>	<p><u>Face to face. Good quarters</u></p> <p>I'm not convinced I learned a great deal from it really. Some role play in quite challenging circumstances, taught you how to cope. Mandatory, then wasn't a lot connected with school that was new. Good support.</p>
	<p>On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation? - RQ2 A2 I</p> <p>On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation? - RQ2 A2 II</p>	<p>It's important, I'd drive myself to do it. Year of hell at the end in mind depth. Allocated time. Meeting people in the same position as you. pit opportunity to push myself, find out what I was capable of, inspiring supportive, comparing p's.</p> <p><u>Value money - all aspects good except the on-line learning</u></p>
	<p>On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation? - RQ2 A3 I</p> <p>On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation? - RQ2 A3 II</p>	<p>I enjoyed it. <u>What was a moment to keep me at the LA. It was a huge jump through.</u></p> <p><u>Useful as meaning to like mental people; reflection time.</u></p>
	<p>On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation? - RQ2 A3 I</p> <p>On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation? - RQ2 A3 II</p>	<p>Discussion. Face to face. Feedback and others' perceptions. p3/p4</p> <p>Developing resilience</p> <p>Really good, worked again with a different but inspirational MT. Became a coach of others.</p> <p><u>Realisation that the school wasn't and never back to one, school to reflect</u></p>
	<p>On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation? - RQ2 A3 I</p> <p>On what criteria do they judge the quality of this preparation? - RQ2 A3 II</p>	<p><u>Sort of useful</u></p> <p>I'm not sure one programme could really in totally prepare you for the role of HT, but exposed you to areas in compartmentalised areas.</p> <p><u>The school placement - showing & embedding</u></p>

Good
|||||

Bad
|||||

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